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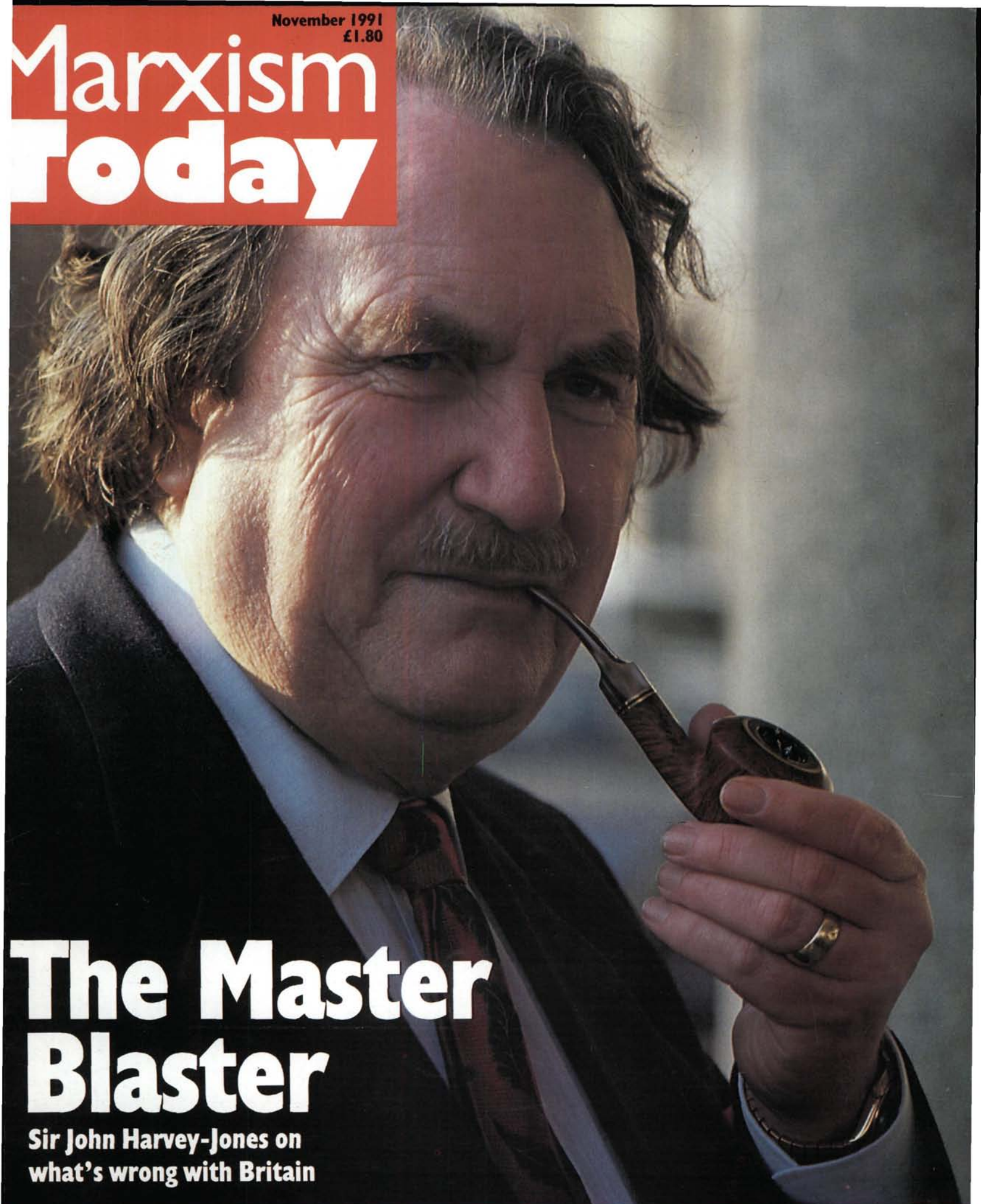
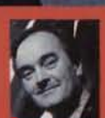


# The Master Blaster

**Sir John Harvey-Jones on what's wrong with Britain**

**Lady Howe on Opportunity 2000**

**Roy Greenslade on the decline of the tabloids**



**Interview with Lord Palumbo**

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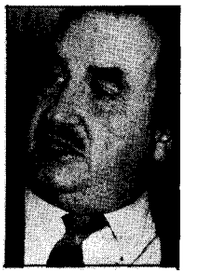

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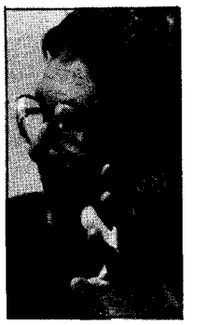

**Opportunity 2000 p6**

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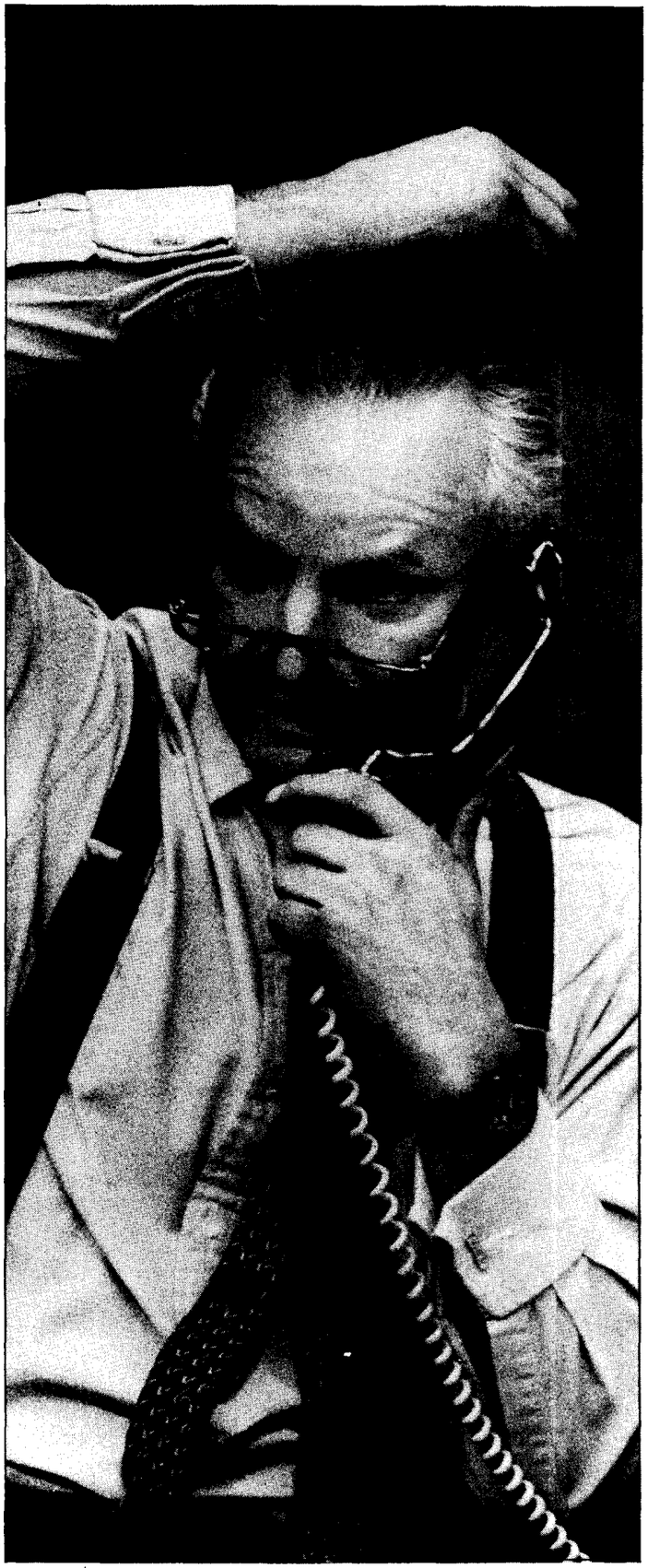
**Charlie Leadbeater** argues Britain's business class has lost its way

# Executive Stress



Select

On a private dining room in one of London's poshest hotels, the chairman of one of Britain's leading companies confesses with resignation that the government is a busted flush. It is a familiar tale around the boardroom luncheon circuit.

The recession has strained, in some cases almost to breaking-point, the Tory Party's relationship with the business class. What executives are less willing to admit is that the recession is also a judgement upon them. They may blame the government, but the business class is going through its own crisis of confidence about its standing in society.

Executives acquired a new-found status in the 1980s. They were the apostles of Thatcherism, spreading the economic, industrial and social changes it sought. Entrepreneurs like Alan Sugar personified the classless dynamism which Thatcherism admired. The likes of Sir Rupert Murdoch and Sir Ian McGregor asserted the authority of management by breaking trade unions. Those like Lord King at British Airways helped the shift of industrial assets from public to private hands. Retailers like Sir Ralph Halpern, Sophie Mirman and George Davies enlivened our shopping centres, while Lord Hanson emerged as the master corporate empire-builder through a string of predatory takeovers.

Money was sloshing around everywhere – rights issues, tax breaks, huge salaries and share options which grew exponentially as profits took off.

It all looks rather different now. Much of the business boom was supported by no more than financial froth; worse, some of it was allegedly fraudulent – witness the Blue Arrow and Guinness cases. Many of the corporate reputations earned in the last few years are looking tarnished as profits have plunged but salaries have continued to rise.

The business class has lost its sense of direction. It should not just be looking for new political leadership; it should also be looking for a new role in society. That should encompass four main elements.

First, vocationalism needs to be given much greater weight than the financial engineering which was so prevalent in the 1980s. Investment in education, training, skills and innovation should be at the forefront of the business agenda.

Second, this vocationalism should be egalitarian. The strong economies, such as Japan and Germany, spread skills throughout society. Britain still wastes far too much ability, a point Sir John Harvey-Jones makes forcefully in this issue.

Third, there should be stronger supervision of how companies behave, to make sure executives are not paid excessively, do not deal in fraud or make huge strategic blunders. Thatcherism encouraged a new, more glamorous set of executives, but they were still a closed elite. Britain needs a system to make executives more formally and openly accountable to employees, shareholders and other groups which are affected by business decisions.

Finally, the British approach to business sits uneasily somewhere between the US model of free market capitalism and a European system of much greater regulation.

British business does not face a stark choice between these models. A new model cannot be purchased off the shelf. But the business class needs to recognise it is being pulled deeper and deeper into an integrated European economy.

The lunchtime conversations do not get this far. But the business class should recognise it is not facing just a temporary loss of confidence in the Tories but, potentially, a much more far-reaching shift in the political parameters for business, whichever party is in power. ●

Charles Leadbeater.



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democratic left

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# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

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The spectre of 90s fascism

# Nazi Business

Illustration: Simon Stern

Geoff Mulgan

Sit back and take it in. War is raging across Europe. Bombers are screaming down on ancient cities. The Balkans are again a powder keg to the world. Unemployment is soaring and hatred of minorities is being stirred up not only by nazi thugs in Bremen and Cottbus but all over Europe. In France everyone from the Socialist prime minister to the neo-liberal opposition is talking about chartering planes to repatriate immigrants.

The scene should be set in the past, in grainy black and white. Instead it is all in glorious technicolour on the evening news. The 1930s – never a favourite decade – are back to haunt us. Even the prime minister is doing his best to look like Stanley Baldwin.

Fortunately – it seems – one thing is different. Where in the 1930s it was in retreat, Western democracy is now on the ideological offensive. The ideas it fought against then look no match now. There are as yet no Hitlers and Mussolinis waiting in the wings. The Gamsakhurdias and Milosevics remain petty despots rather than totalitarian monsters.

At first glance this confirms a gut feeling that the world has moved irreversibly on. Most of us have been brought up to see fascism and nazism as bizarre anachronisms, accidents of history peculiar to the strange circumstances of world war one, Versailles and depression. Scratch the surface, though, and the complacency soon disappears. Respectable politicians across Europe are again toying with racism and the assertion of national cultural identity against aliens. Migration has become the number one concern not only in Mitteleuropa (the wits point out that 1989's lasting achievement was to move the Iron Curtain 10 yards westwards) but also in France and even Italy where the navy now patrols the shores against would-be immigrants.

In such a Europe it is premature to assume that a modern fascism is inconceivable. After all, the rebirth of 19th-century economic liberalism shows that most ideas never die, but just rest on the shelf until history calls them forth again.

It is still less than 50 years since the far Right came within an inch of uniting Europe from the Atlantic to Moscow, to be defeated only by the intervention of the USA and Hitler's overreach in the East. Also within living memory is the time when many of the best and the brightest were willing to flirt with supremacist ideas, nihilism and cults of modernity. Again, the grainy images are misleading because they conceal the extent to which the far Right was, and could be again, a very modern political force.

What would a fascism for the 1990s look like? It could start from its pessimistic view of human nature as innately dark, competitive or violent. It could move from faith in the competitive virtues of the untrammelled market to belief in an equally untrammelled competition between nations: a true survival of the fittest (and perhaps the ideal ideology for an age with a cult of fitness to match the 1930s). And it could portray itself as the home of community against the cold and heartless alienation of multinational capitalism. Most powerful of all, where the Left celebrates community without boundaries, the far Right could cultivate the idea that a community, and a nation, is defined by those it excludes.

There are now three reasons for fearing that this theoretical potential could become a political reality. The first is that each of these currents can be found in the prevailing right-wing thought of modern Europe. Though they remain to be fused into coherent political form they are nevertheless present as ingredients waiting for the master chef to harness them to popular discontent, fear and hatred.

The second reason – for western Europe – is quite simply the scale of the ethnic issue. The EC now has 12m immigrants within its borders, even before large-scale migration from the east. North Africa's population is set to double by the year 2030. It is not that multi-ethnic societies will automatically breed racism – the Netherlands and Sweden, the two countries with the highest proportion of foreigners, remain fairly liberal. But it is already clear from the experience of France, that a fairly small migrant population can fuel a far Right that can in turn permeate first the orthodox Right and later the whole of political discourse.

The third reason is most pressing for the countries of eastern Europe as they struggle to find their place in the modern world. If it wanted to, the far Right could offer a compelling alternative to those who believe in the free market as a sufficient condition for modernisation and integration in the world economy. A latter-day fascist could point out that all the world's most successful nations (with the USA and UK as sole exceptions) have used the state to accumulate capital, drive progress, build infrastructures and force each part of society to work to a common national end.

A sophisticated modern fascist need look no further than South East Asia for a model for Poland, the Ukraine and Latvia. Strip away their Confucian solidarity (or replace it with Catholicism) – and the combination of an authoritarian state, national corporatism and a ruthless commitment to competition gives the ideal formula. From Singapore you can even add a little bit of eugenics for good measure.

Such thoughts seem a long way from the closed world of British politics. There is still little sign of the far Right in British society now that it has been either marginalised or absorbed within modern Toryism, though in the tabloids this autumn there are unmistakeable signs of an imminent re-run of the immigration scares of the 1970s.

But as our culture and politics integrates with Europe, and as the centre of the new Europe shifts irretrievably eastwards from Brussels to Berlin, our insulation will not last long. Nor will it be long before we too are swept up in the huge trauma of mass migration. Even with a Channel we will still be part of a post-1992 EC which promises the free movement of people.

It is in this context that the potential for a coherent, modern fascism should not be underestimated. With history unfrozen by the collapse of communism, and with even as prosperous a nation as the old West Germany finding its politics transformed by the undertow from the east, the stakes are now very high. Defeated on the battlefield and discredited for more than a generation, the far Right is a genuine menace once again.●



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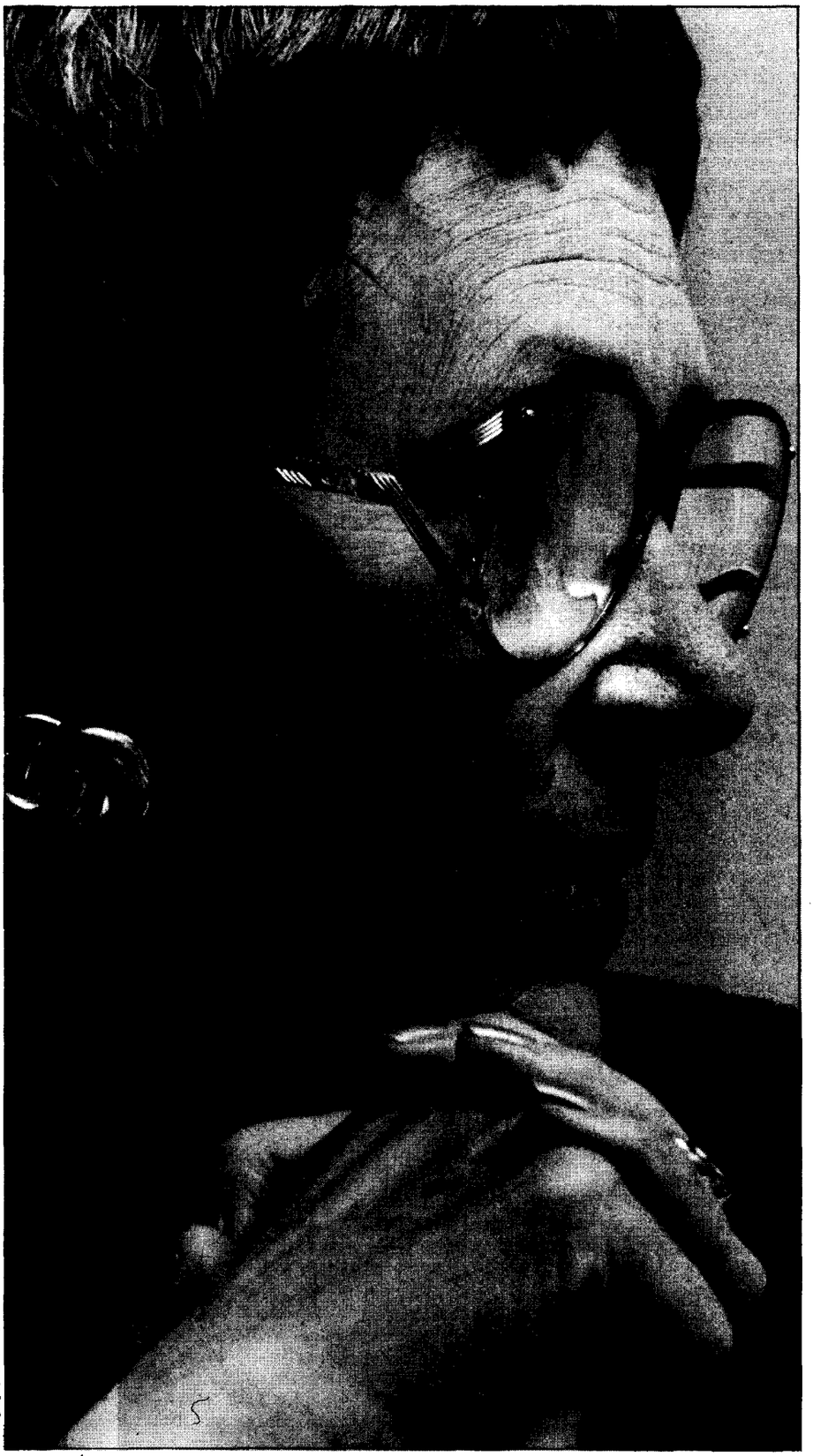
**Geraldine Bedell** talks to Lady Elspeth Howe

# Opportunity Knocks



Photography: Abel Lagos

**Lady Howe chairs the Business In The Community Target team on women's economic development which this week launches Opportunity 2000, a campaign to improve the quality and quantity of women's participation in the workforce**

**Do you see John Major's backing of Opportunity 2000 as a policy reversal?**
Opportunity 2000 is not political. Whoever was prime minister we'd have welcomed him or her for the launch. But I see it as a very natural progression. I think John Major has always been well aware of women's abilities: you know, he's got Sarah Hogg. We'd all have liked him to have a woman in the cabinet, but no doubt there were other constraints. I don't see his support as a reversal; my whole approach is the dripping on stone approach. You just keep on expounding the issues, both in the Tory Party and in business.

**Yet the 1980s were not especially good years for women, given the freezing of child benefit, the downgrading of the role of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), or the responses to EC initiatives on parental leave.**
It's perfectly fair to say that child benefit got frozen and so on, and in that sense I suppose you could say it's a policy reverse. But I do honestly think in other areas it's a continuation.

**Will companies determine their own 'Opportunity 2000' policies internally? And also do their own monitoring?**
There are two important points about Opportunity 2000. One, it's about going public – whether with a numerical target for women in management positions, or a general approach to recruitment or career breaks or whatever; and two, companies themselves will measure and monitor progress. But each company will make a public statement and no doubt will be asked questions from time to time. But there is also considerable self-interest involved. I want positive action, rather than positive discrimination, and I want it to come from the feeling that it's right and just – which it is. But it must also come from a strict business bottom line approach. The Business In The Community target team addressed the issue on those lines: 'Look, companies out there, look what you're missing! If you don't take account of this you're not going to be competitive!'

**In which case, why not leave it to market forces?**



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I think you underestimate the power of the traditionalists! Of course you would think that market forces would do it. I do believe in market forces and they will have a considerable effect, but sometimes you have to move the goalposts: the Sex Discrimination Act was an example of a vital piece of legislation, especially the concept of indirect discrimination. There are some issues where 'public goods' are involved which need a slight tilt. You might say that childcare ought to be paid for. But we don't say that about education, and we don't say it – nor are we going to! – about the health service. There are certain things which we regard as public goods, rightly. Though I am not saying you shouldn't pay for bits of them. I think you can rightly charge for nursery education, a reasonable cost.

**Do you also see Opportunity 2000 as a way of liberating men?**
Oh yes! Fathers are enjoying their children much more than they ever did in the past. I remember at the EOC attending an IBM conference; I was the only woman, apart from all these ladies in pink coats putting us into our seats. We were looking at issues that would be important up to the turn of the century – and there was nothing about women's roles. So I simply couldn't resist it and I made a very gentle statement about how sad it was that men at the top worked so hard. And how much better if women's skills were more valued by employers so that both women and men had time to enjoy their families. Two things happened. The ladies in pink all clapped. And afterwards the men all came up and cried on my shoulders.

**Has the role of women in the Conservative Party changed in your time, and has that affected policy?**
I got very interested in women's issues quite early on and played a little part in the women's side of the Tory Party, on the National Advisory Committee as it was then called. With some of the younger wives, I found an increasingly intellectual approach. I was, I think, always interested in childcare and equal opportunities. And the Party has increasingly had to take account of the fact that women do work.

**Did you feel ever feel irritated by Thatcherite rhetoric about housekeeping, by the idea that there is no such thing as society and that the family was at the centre of life? Was that ever embarrassing, given your background at the EOC?**
I don't think it particularly irritated me. You can't ever, in any political party, get everything entirely your way. I'm not saying that one hasn't had flak. But the whole point of being part of a political party is to get it to move about the issues you care about and to move slightly faster. Conservatives bring their own particular approach to women's issues. There is tremendous concern about the family among Conservatives, and to some extent ambivalence about what role women play within the family and the working community. One has been trying to put forward, constantly and I hope with some success, the full spectrum of women and their changed role.

I think what is central to the Tory Party approach is choice – that you're not pressurising people to go out to work, say, when they would rather stay at home. But of course, not everyone can make that choice. They can't afford not to work. I think the family is absolutely crucial, but you've got to take account of how the family changes. And how society changes – and I do believe in society, or community or whatever you want to call it. To my mind the whole role of the politician is, of course, to lead. But also to reflect and adapt legislation to meet changing needs.

**Do you think you would have had more freedom of movement to push those issues if your husband hadn't been a minister?**
I don't think so, no. In many ways I've had pretty good access to opinion formers; I knew many people shaping policy personally. As far as the Tory Party policy on childcare is concerned, I think it is no secret that I have advocated a higher profile for childcare. And I think there have been a number of important initiatives: there is this workplace nursery concession which is actually more widely useable than has perhaps been realised in the past. My own particular view is that we should have more emphasis on priming the supply of childcare. A lot of people would like to set up nurseries, but the actual cost of providing a service of quality is prohibitive. So my view is that some form of tax relief, or childcare vouchers, would just take the edge off a proper charge.

**There has been a powerful Tory tradition of women fighting for women's issues, but as a fairly narrow interest group – consistently arguing for tax relief on childcare and independent taxation of married women. My feeling is that you have transcended that in some way, and addressed the concerns of the mass of women. How did that come about?**
I don't accept what you say about the Tory Party – no way was it out of touch with what was happening. We had an outside oganisations committee which had representation on other bodies, such as the National Council of Women, which reported back on the issues facing women. Taking for example the campaign for separate taxation for women, there were many organisations involved. At the EOC we had that campaign right up front.

**You say you reported back. How far do you feel that women inside the Tory Party have been powerful?**
On the whole pretty powerful. I don't think anybody in a position where you're not making the decisions is as powerful as when you're actually making the decisions youself. That is why the Hansard Society looked at women at the top: not because we're not concerned with women at the bottom and the lower levels of work – but because if you want to be shaping the world, whether the corporate world or the political world, you have to be up there at the top, contributing to the debate and the decisions.

**To what extent did Margaret Thatcher advance the cause of women?**
Oh, quite considerably. I have very little doubt about that. If one thinks role models are important, and I do, the fact that there has been a woman prime minister is vitally important. If you're asking if she took a particular line in advancing women I would probably say no. Because – although I wouldn't necessarily have agreed with this, I think it is a perfectly tenable point of view – as the first woman prime minister, she didn't want to favour any particular group, particularly the one she represented. Where she did play a role was in things like public appointments. There was a quite considerable post-Hansard Report increase in the numbers of women appointed to the House of Lords. Even more so under John Major.

**One of the things often said about her is that she used her sexuality effectively. Do you think that was true, and is it a permissible and acceptable way for women to get what they want?**
I think you use your whole personality, and she had a strong one. I am sure whether male or female you use the whole of your skill, and you do it almost subconsciously.●



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Constitutional reformers must swap decency for dynamism

# Radical Restraint

Illustration: Simon Stern

Sarah Benton

There is something very proper and genteel about the current debate on constitutional reform. Charter 88's fringe meeting at the Labour Party conference in October was a small, nicely-spoken affair, in contrast to the angry mass meeting of the Labour Left Liaison that sprawled across the room next door. The Scottish constitutional meetings have, for all their radical intent, been most restrained. At the 'Constitutional Convention' in Manchester on November 1-3 some once-wild voices in politics are threatening to stir it up from the floor. But on the whole it promises to be as decorous as the event organised by the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) in September.

The IPPR's conference, held in the RSA's elegant Adam's house off the Strand, was to discuss the constitution it had painstakingly drafted. For the invited participants, the most unsettling phenomenon during the two days was the phallic tower in James Barry's 1770s mural, or perhaps the nippled dome in the panel next to it. Apart from a few rough Irish voices, who have largely and unaccountably been excluded from Charter 88, it was a polite and gentlemanly occasion which pleasured the lawyers present, rather than trumpeted a future politics for the current discontent.

Now there is nothing innately conservative about constitutional reform. The Paine-ite radicals of the 18th century, the Chartists, the prewar suffragettes, were all deeply subversive of Britain's political culture in their demands for constitutional change. The problem so far has been that constitutional change has been championed by the rulers-in-waiting, or rather, the rulers who are tired of waiting. One section of the would-be establishment has set itself up against the other on the platform of limited constitutional change. Thus James Cornford, the head of the IPPR and a man of out-and-out decency, has pledged his life to the achievement of a written constitution.

This sort of dissent has been developing since the early 1980s. An early sign was the effort of then Conservative intellectual Keith Middlemas who started a journal, *Catalyst*, to express the values of the excluded governors of Britain. Like parts of the IPPR, it spoke for the decent, respectable, post-Keynsian, post-Bloomsbury class. It was, and is, the class that expected to write the minority report, at least, on Royal Commissions, and quite often sign the main report and even on occasions, like the Williams Commission on Obscenity, or Noel Annan's on the Future of Broadcasting, chair the commission itself. It certainly expected to make up the bodies of British political intellectual life, whatever it signed. Hence the affront when Thatcher decreed there should be no commissions to sit on; the heirs of Keynes and Bloomsbury were not paranoid to suspect she wanted to kill off their influence.

The problem, however, for constitutional change is that it needs a movement behind it, and some hooks into actual struggle and need. Without that, the constitutionalists are trapped, trying to rearrange the political system but never generating enough energy to change it. It is usually said, especially by Labour, that there is no movement for change because the working class is not interested in it. But the constitutionalists themselves have rather fastidiously avoided any connection to controversial causes. There is a huge gulf between Britain's most radical popular movement of the late 80s – the campaign against the poll tax – and the political reformers. Charter 88, a national body has few organic connections to the local or community groups in whose interest political reform lie. IPPR, a London think-tank, has none.

This leaves us with the Liberal Democrats. There is no doubt that the restless search for a role by a party which is, in many ways, a conventional and middle-class grouping, has radicalised British political debate. Unlike the other supporters of constitutional reform, the Liberal Democrats do have community links and local organisation. It is this connection to necessity and actuality which the constitutional campaign urgently needs. But although the Liberal Democrats would seem well poised to provide it, they too are restrained by their own conservatism. They denounce trade unions more fervently than Michael Howard, seeing them as an affront to some sort of sacrosanct individualism, which it is their radical heritage to guard.

The constitutional provisions which most of the reformers come up with do respond to modern life: for instance, the IPPR's draft introduces the notion of respect for private life, and creates a new civic category of the 'British national', in an attempt to resolve disputes over British nationality. It incorporates most of the European Social Charter in its list of 'social and economic rights'. But more contentious areas of modern life, like the rights of an unmarried couple, or the persistent problems of a woman's right of command over her own body, remain untouched.

If the cause of constitutional reform is to be rescued from the withering touch of the lawyers, vital but different issues like unwanted pregnancies, sexual harassment, privacy from press intrusion, immigration, gay and lesbian parents, have to be included. In practical political terms, it means that the people whose interests are affected need to be at the conference to discuss them. That means they have to be invited. But it also means they need to see constitutional change as being in their interest – as a partial solution at least to their problem. That link still has not been made.

The Labour Party's scepticism over popular support for constitutional reform is well-grounded. Its scepticism over the relevance of the political system to social progress is not. As it has found out, to its own cost, the most well-intentioned political party cannot create the good society on the backs of a passive and apathetic people. It is exactly this impossibility which has allowed the Right, in Britain, the USA, and France, to argue that there is no point spending money on social problems because it simply disappears into the bottomless pits of urban depravity.

Labour could create the vitalising links between paper constitution and actual constituencies seeking political rights within a system which currently excludes them. Links to unpopular causes, like the poll tax defaulters or immigrants threatened with deportation, will create a messier politics of constitutional reform; but they might just produce the dynamism British political culture needs to move into the future.●



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# More Hard Labour

*John Edmonds is general secretary of the GMB, Britain's general union*

Tony Blair (*MT* October) was right to remind us that the debate about public services should not be about 'how we provide the basic minimum, but about how society guarantees each citizen, as of right, equal access to the best services'.

British socialists of the last 100 years understood well enough that the concentration of economic power in the hands of a wealthy elite frustrated the development of a just society. Unfortunately, we were better at working out how to take economic power from the few than we were at redistributing power to the many. Painful experience has taught us that state-owned organisations do not automatically strive to provide the highest quality of service to the greatest number.

The failure of the public sector to give a high priority to customer service sapped the confidence of the Labour Party. When Thatcher attacked public ownership in all its forms, our defence was pathetically feeble. Only when the Conservative attack reached the NHS did we believe that we had a cause worth fighting for.

Tony Blair recommends 'a new political settlement between individuals and society'. Such a settlement must be based on the notion that the state should redistribute power, taking care that this power goes to individuals and not to new state-run organisations. No country in history has managed to achieve full employment, decent homes for its citizens, comprehensive health care, and quality education for all without heavy state provision. What we must create are state-owned services with the ambition to provide the best.

The question – what kind of public service? – should create no problems for democratic socialists. The answer – as good as society can afford and open to all – should spring from our lips. The Labour Party should strive for the highest quality public provision, impatient with shoddiness, and demanding better and better. The redefinition of Labour's belief in the public services will highlight the Tories' difficulties. For Thatcher, the issue was straightforward. Private provision was good, public provision was bad. Her difficulty was that the British people would not tolerate the effect of such political rigour in our education services and, particularly, in the NHS.

Major and Patten are trying to have it both ways. They claim to believe in Thatcher's free market for health, education and transport. But they also pose as a party that has rediscovered its faith in public services. I suspect that the trick will not work; the speeches at the Conservative Party conference gave the game away. Lamont's promised tax cuts will deny the resources needed for high quality public services, while Major's 'society of choice' reserves for the rich the right to buy themselves into (better) public education, and into (better) private health. And the Tories' newly-stated belief in inherited wealth means that the right to buy a better choice will be passed down from generation to generation.

The long election campaign will not only give the Labour Party a great opportunity to trumpet its belief in quality public services, but will also give enough time for the contradictions in Tory policy to be fully exposed.●

*Lord Kilmarnock is executive director of the Social Market Foundation*

Tony Blair is a likeable member of the shadow cabinet, whose popularity rating is higher than his opposite number, Michael Howard's. He may shortly be secretary of state for employment. He is also a thoughtful man, as evidenced by his article 'Forging A New Agenda' (*MT* October). But are his thoughts radical enough?

Asserting plausibly that public action is back on the agenda, Blair abjures the 'old failings of collectivisation'. He then flourishes 'a new overarching principle of the public interest' as his magic wand, which he claims will protect the individual against 'the vested interests of both market and state'. He acknowledges the possibility of abuse by individuals of 'the very action supposed to assist them': ie, government action.

This is a step forward. But his benign picture of 'the public interest' guaranteeing personal freedom against both market and state is not convincing, because ultimately the state decides what is in the public interest and what is not. He later accepts the case for a written constitution. But a much more thoroughgoing reform than the partial and selective measures favoured by Roy Hattersley, for instance, is required. Labour should sign up for a popular front on constitutional reform, which the Tories won't touch with a barge-pole.

Blair next asserts that 'the essential values of the country, actually socialist values, remain'. I am not one to ape the fashionable sneers against socialism at all times and in all places; there have been horrible regimes to which the only possible response has been 'socialist'. But that is not the case in Britain today. A pietistic adherence to 'democratic socialism' may assuage an internal Labour Party neurosis, but it is of little interest to the country at large. 'Social democracy' has a much better resonance and is up for grabs. Seize it.

On the 'social market', Blair says that in the hands of Major or Ashdown this becomes a mix of Tory or even Thatcherite economics with Labour welfare policy, as if the 'social' and the 'market' operated in different spheres. That is a misrepresentation which, I suspect, is true to neither of their views. An essential ingredient of the British version of the social market economy is the sophisticated application of market techniques to the delivery of better quality and more cost-effective public services.

This cannot simply be dismissed as creeping privatisation, *pace* Labour's scaremongering NHS campaign. Labour's big problem is going to be money. As Hamish McRae pointed out recently in *The Independent*, fiscal regimes will increasingly compete for international capital; no one nation can step wildly out of line. High tax regimes are a thing of the past. High growth rates cannot be counted on to bail Labour out. Tory *canards*, warning of a Labour tax and spending spree, are merely the stuff of electioneering; Labour spending will in fact be severely hemmed in. Labour, in power, will have to look for cost-cutting expedients and efficiency savings in the NHS and elsewhere, just like us social marketeers. The social market economy, by whatever name, will be the flavour of the decade.●

## Out In The Open

Chris Granlund's article on outing (*MT* September) made constructive suggestions: it is important that gays make alliances, as all campaigns should to achieve political advancement. However, I am not so sure that attacking gays for being 'essentialist' is fair. The point is that gays are pushed into being essentialist about the nature of sexual identity; for them to discuss openly their thoughts and feelings about the opposite sex is a way of denying their homosexuality, something that many gays, not just closeted ones, do all too readily.

I also find it difficult to accept his assumption that there exists a mass of people who don't mind being '(mis)taken' for a homosexual. Just where are they? How many parents, for example, are prepared to contemplate their children developing intimate relationships with other children of the same gender?

Granlund appears to construct a sexual identity around the idea of 'unruly desire'. But it is possible that many who identify as homosexuals do so because they enjoy the companionship or solidarity of individuals who happen to be of the same sex as them; these two reasons being the driving force behind my own sexual identity.

I doubt that those who identify as 'straight' necessarily do so because of their desires: a wish to attain status and a modicum of security compels many. A recent MORI poll on the British family confirms the lack of importance many heterosexuals attribute to sex. More than 20% claimed 'all they do in bed is sleep'. Economic insecurity, heightened as a result of the collapse of the social democratic consensus in the British polity, makes it a more harrowing choice to risk hard-won privilege for a few moments of passion.●

*Jeremy Killingray, London*

## Correction:

Fred Steward's article 'Yesterday's World' (*MT* October) stated: 'This does mean the subordination of basic science to industrial and economic goals'. It should, however, have read: 'This does *not* mean the subordination of basic science to industrial and economic goals'. Our apologies for any confusion this might have caused.



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# Of Mice Or Men?

Lynne Segal's critique of Robert Bly's book *Iron John* (*MT* September) fails to offer any explanation for the book's surprise popularity in the United States. Ironically, her definition of masculinity 'as a concept enmeshed in various discursive practices and social relations which have conferred power and authority' merely reaffirms an impoverished sense of gender identity, which many men are trying to combat. It's not that the definition is incorrect; but more that it only tells part of the story, because it remains indifferent to the genuine struggle experienced by those men seeking to achieve constructive change.

Bly's simplistic mysticism will continue to appeal as long as it exists as the only alternative to a masculinity seen simply as a social construct. Both men and women have internalised a whole series of destructive messages which have shaped their gender identities. Consequently men, as well as women, need the opportunity to acknowledge these messages, and recognise feelings which do not coincide with accepted views of power and control and are far removed from the 'politically correct'.

Men will be able to strive for genuinely non-oppressive behaviour only when the shaky complexity of male identity is accepted by both men and women. Until this moment, the only options available for 'changing men are the patronising 'right-on-ness' of the 'non-sexist' politico, or the new age psychobabble of Bly et al.●

*Robin Tuddenham, Essex*

## Man Overboard

Although embedded in Lynne Segal's piece on Robert Bly's *Iron John* (*MT* September) is a grudging reference to its strengths 'such as they are', for the most part her tone is mocking. Easy to do, as she says, but not really the stuff of reasoned criticism.

Segal rightly identifies 'masculinity' as a concept 'enmeshed in... discursive practices and social relations'. Raymond Williams, in *Marxism And Literature*, goes still-further: he has shown that concepts produced in language are constitutive elements of human 'practical consciousness' or lived experience. Clearly, then, 'masculinity', even as a concept, must go to the deepest structures of human psychology, and may indeed be dredged to good or bad effect.

I can see 'structures of feeling arising' from Robert Bly's book which will help many men feel less at a distance from attempts to undermine gender polarities – as Lynne Segal puts it. Men who I – working in a night shelter for homeless and hairy ones – see being treated as subhuman, by people who are not really passive victims of male hegemony, but rather, beings making, shaping and remaking our culture.●

*Neil Kelly, Southampton*

## Makeover, Sir?

Tony Blair (*MT* October) embodies the new moderation of the Labour Party. The problem is that the new moderates are now attempting to apply some philosophical blush to a visage where the base makeup owes its genesis to market research. The exercise, to be more authentic, should have been the other way round.

For Blair, the 'fundamental error' of the Liberal Democrats and the 'abiding inadequacy' of the Tories is their mutual inability to recognise that 'private wealth and capital can and do have the potential to exploit the individual'. But it is simply outrageous to suggest that Social and Liberal Democrats (let us remember our lineage here) could turn a Nelson's eye to the exploitative potential of private interests. Where we part company with this week's Labour Party is in our determination to tackle unhealthily loaded state interests as well.

The privatisation issue is instructive here; with each Tory privatisation, Labour has opposed it, defended public monopoly, yet promised only to a very limited extent to try to resecure a higher state presence at a later date. By sharp contrast, we have opposed Tory privatisation, seeing scant advantage in the mutation from public to private monopoly, arguing instead for economic liberalisation within the utilities sector – further decentralisation and genuine, consumer-oriented competition.

Or take taxation: the UK continues to suffer from the hangover generated in significant measure by the Lawson 1987 binge budget. We opposed his tax cuts; Labour did not. We have said that if a 1% increase in the basic rate of income tax becomes necessary to inject around £2 billion of essential expenditure into education, we would do it. By contrast, Labour – in this and other fields – wills the ends while remaining vague and unconvincing on the means. By refusing to be forthright, they forfeit any claim to pronounce, as Blair does, upon the principles and politics of a social market economy.●

*Charles Kennedy MP, president of the Liberal Democrats, London*

## Arms And The Ban

The scenario envisaged by Dr Barnaby (*MT* October) – a world where military expenditure is not reduced, but rather diverted to modern defensive weaponry – is flawed on several counts. His argument is predicated on all-powerful military research lobbies which function without regard to geopolitical realities. Thus, in spite of the fact that the goal of bringing the Soviet Union into the Western orbit has been achieved, he believes that 'the Soviet-American arms race will continue'.

But research establishments and their lobbies do not function *in vacuo*. They depend on the political will to impose the necessary taxation, which cash-strapped superpowers will find increasingly hard to justify.

While democracy's potential for anti-nuclear and disarmament lobbies is largely untapped, Dr. Barnaby's fatalistic assumptions can only inhibit their growth.●

*Dorothy Friedman, London*

## Low Pay Don't Pay

I feel that Edward Balls' article (*MT* September) has missed the point. Minimum wages are not just a question of economics but of ethics – what is a person worth?

Low wages are invariably accompanied by extremely bad working conditions, where the workers are viewed as subhumans. On employment training, I recently worked in a private residential home for the elderly. The full-time care assistants received £1.50 per hour. They were shouted at or spoken to with contempt and in general, like the residents, lived in a state of fear and intimidation.

Due to the humiliating way I was spoken to, I slowly lost the ability to think and became like a zombie. For human beings in this day and age to have to endure such working conditions is an obscenity.

I accept that a minimum wage may result in higher unemployment, but, personally speaking, I would far rather live on social security than have to put up with a low wage and conditions of the kind that I have just described. At least when one is unemployed one is free.●

*Ruth Nicholl, Angus*

## Mods And Rockers

Your issue on the need to modernise Britain (*MT* October) presents a peculiarly British obsession. Harold Wilson tried to modernise in 1964 and Margaret Thatcher in 1979. Both failed. Why?

Not least, surely, because of Britain's position in the world economy. The modern economies are those of countries like Brazil and South Korea. Our job must be to overthrow the antiquated British system altogether, rather than engage in further tinkering – even if it is given the exciting name of modernisation.●

*Charles Murray, London*

## Credit Due

I felt compelled to write to you to say how much I admired Will Hutton's excellent article (*MT* October). We hear a great deal nowadays about the need for economic reforms in Britain and, separately, about the need for democratic reform. It is not often that the case for both of these, the two being inextricably linked in a seamless web, is put. Hutton's article shows very clearly how democratic reform is both a noble goal in itself and will lead on to economic success for Britain.●

*Alan H Houston, Belfast*

## Editorial Note:

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# Mr UK plc Himself

## Britain's top industrialist talks to Britain's leading left-wing magazine. *Charlie Leadbeater* interviews **Sir John Harvey-Jones**

**Sir John Harvey-Jones was a lieutenant-commander in the Royal Navy. He joined ICI in 1957 and was chair from 1982-87. He is currently chair of the *Economist* and deputy chair of Grand Met and Guinness Peat Aviation. His television series *Troubleshooter* was broadcast last year.**

**What is your assessment of how lasting the damage of this recession might be, and how serious it will prove to be for British industry?**

When it was clear that we were inducing a recession, I forecast that we'd lose another 10% of our manufacturing capacity which would have been catastrophic. I don't think we've lost as much as that, but what we have done is to lose another two years of investment. And what worries me is that a combination of that, plus the pressures on maintaining dividend payments, means that companies have simply not been investing vast amounts ahead of 1992. So there is a butcher's bill to pay which will be serious.

Incidentally I should make clear that I don't represent anybody, I'm just a retired old fart.

The worry I've had throughout is that

**Harvey-Jones on Harvey-Jones: 'I don't represent anybody, I'm just a retired old fart.'**

the best of the large companies are as good as any anywhere. But the strength of Germany is very much in the medium-sized companies. And what people in Britain continuously forget is that if you're a medium-sized company in Europe, you're accustomed to crossing frontiers anyway, whereas to us it is a great adventure – parlez-vous-français, all this sort of stuff. If you view Britain through the other end of a telescope, we look like a pretty soft option, and if you view Europe from here, it is still viewed very much as being something which might be nice to do a bit of business with.

We combine a certain amount of ignorance with a lack of a feeling of urgency that we're going to be attacked, which we are. And you must add to that the relatively low aspirations of many medium-sized firms. We reach a comfort level in Britain at a depressingly low level of achievement. Not a depressingly low level for individuals – they're happy, they've got their small BMW and their nice house and they reach a sort of plateau where, in terms



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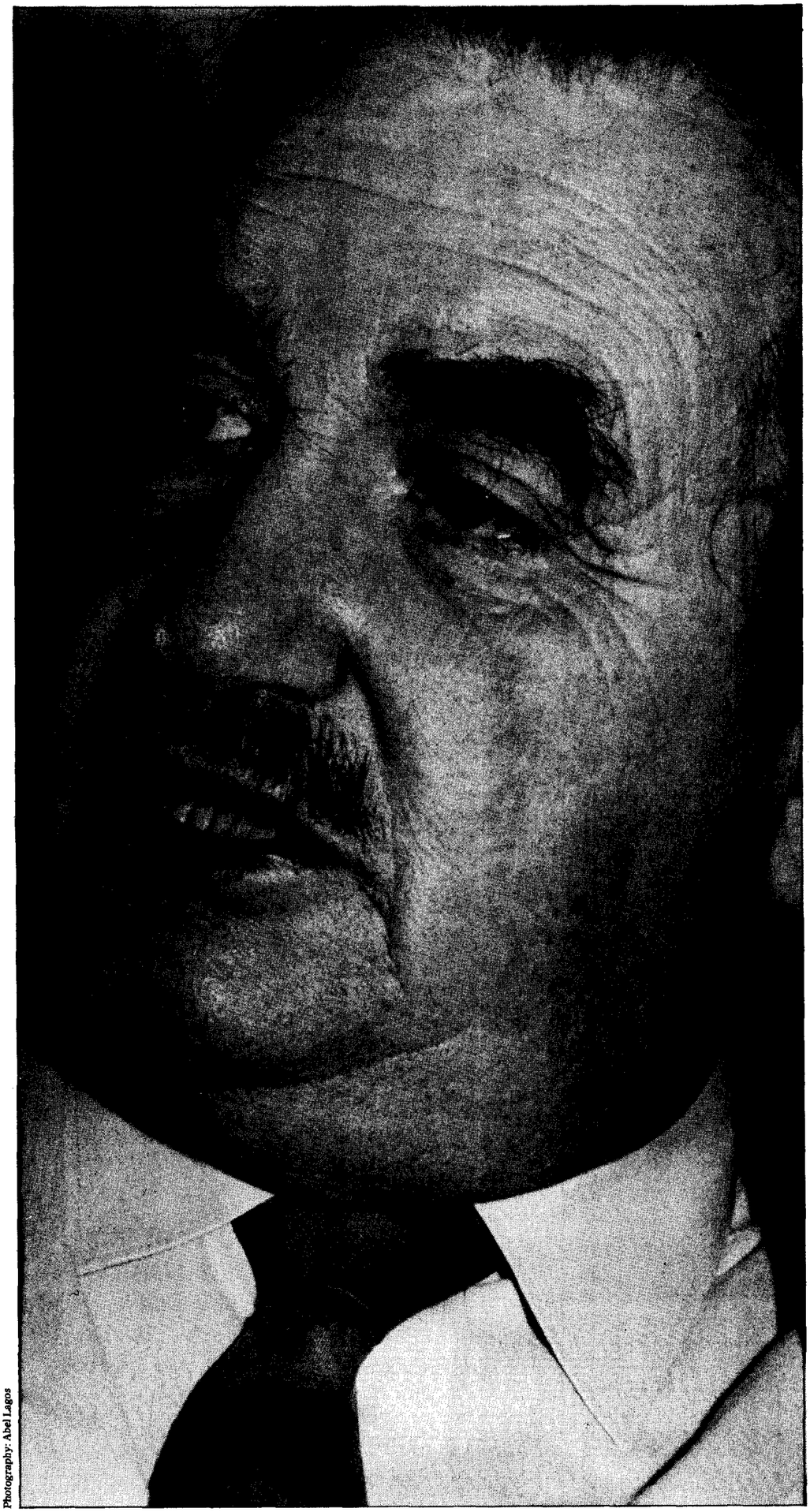

Photography: Abel Lagos

of industrial success, they can sort of live in this nirvana land forever. You find a much more professional and aggressive approach on the continent.

**So what would be your balance sheet of the last 10 years?**

I think we lost more of the industrial base than we needed to. I have no doubt that British management is better. An awful lot of old and less professional management has gone. I have no doubt that there is a realisation that there are no free lunches and that your security depends on your ability to earn it. I have little doubt that most of the troops recognise and accept that as well. So to that extent there is an acceptance of a change on the shop floor.

But the problem is we've lost too much and we've lost too many of the command-

**Harvey-Jones on the British economy: 'The problem is we've lost too much and we've lost too many of the commanding heights.'**

ing heights. I take solace that we've got Nissan and Toyota and if we didn't we'd be in deep, deep shit. But anybody who thinks that Nissan plays BMW has just never visited the two places. I mean you visit Nissan in Sunderland and there are 1200 splendid Brits behaving in an admirable manner. Visit BMW and there are something like seven bloody great campuses full of engineers and marketing and design people and all the rest of it.

It is better than having nothing at all, but it's not as good as having your own total car industry. And I mean, with the best will in the world, Rover's just not credible as a long haul thing. We've still got skills here but we've lost the ability to turn those into world-beating products. I don't blame Mrs T for that, it's been a steady decline over a long time, but one's got to realise that every time they sell a Merc they sell the products of two or three thousand other German companies and if we're very lucky perhaps two Brits.

**What responsibility does government have for that process of industrial modernisation?**

Well I've never bought this whole 'all you do is promote a competitive market and bless the City of London and hire a couple of yuppies and everything's fine' – I've never seen that as being a very viable picture. I look at our main industrial competitors, like Japan or Germany, or France even, and I notice they don't work that way. France has got a bad name at the present moment, because some of the state investments they've made are not looking as good as they were; but since I think that most of



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the money which is invested by government is wasted anyway, I'm always grateful if anything good comes out of it. The French nuclear industry may have been a great mistake but, by God, it's there and they've got highly competitive energy costs for a long time.

I used to have rather sad arguments that the industrial policy in Britain could be defined as having the highest cost of capital, the highest cost of energy, loading onto industry a greater share of the tax burden than existed before Mrs T took over, and increasing every single government controlled input into the industrial base at a higher rate than inflation. Now that's an industrial policy. I mean, this is the bloody trouble: an industrial policy is really the entire environment in which industry operates. It involves things like whether, actually, you can get a labour force that is educated. And it's no good saying train your own and teach your chaps to read when they come and join you. If that's not what happens in other countries, you start off with another load on industry.

**Would you support a measure of compulsion, some sort of levy, on training and education?**

I'm a passionate believer in training and education. I don't think the role of education is to turn out cannon-fodder for industry. I think the role of education is to try and ensure that the people of our country have their talents, in whatever direction they are, developed to the maximum that each individual can. And the comments that I made about the aspirations of our firms can be matched yet again in spades by the aspirations of our people. Our people spend their whole time being told they can't do things, and believing they can't do things. It's just not true. You've only got to look at the people who are written off in this country and see their ability to teach themselves to play the guitar or use computers, to do a host of things, outside the system. Get them inside the bloody system, and it becomes smart not to win, smart not to improve. In this country, a guy who wants to improve himself, who wants to go on a training course, is looked upon as being a boss's man. We've got really substantial cultural legacies in this country which we have to overcome.

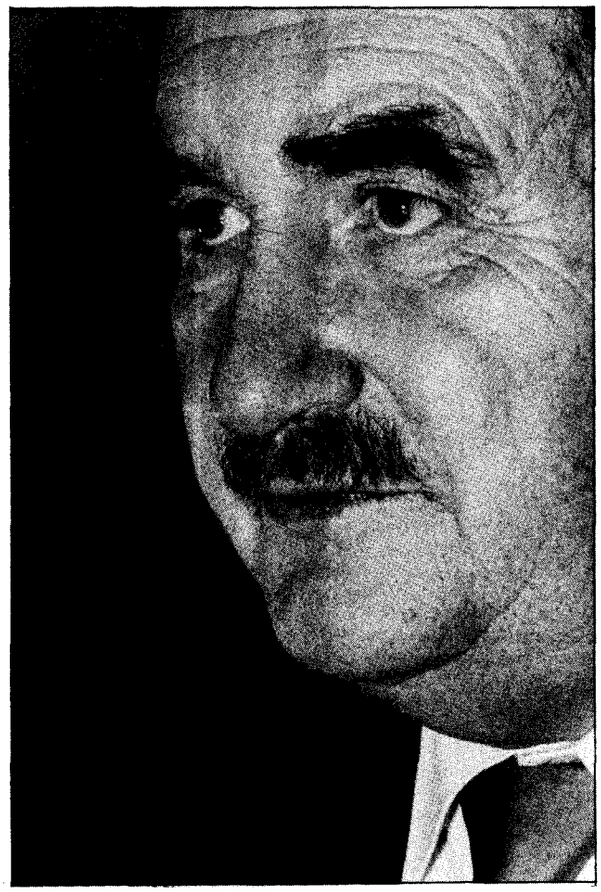
**And beyond a more developed policy on education and training?**

Well, how about having an energy policy for example? We're the only country in Europe that actually has access to every form of energy. Do you happen to hold the view that the market can automatically sort out the best use of dwindling resources?

**Do you think there's a case for government to set up an investment fund in new technology and science-related businesses?**

No, I'm not terribly keen on that, but what I am pretty keen on is the sort of things that happen in other countries. If you've got a major restructuring situation in Germany or in Japan, government don't pour money in, but they also don't just let the guys slug it out in the mud until you scrape around and pick up a battered bleeding chap and say: 'go in there and kill the competition'.

**Harvey-Jones on politics: 'I'm not a supporter of the Labour Party, I'm not a supporter of any bloody party – at the present moment, like I guess two-thirds of the bloody country, I feel myself disenfranchised.'**



**Harvey-Jones on Thatcherism: 'You were only allowed to serve your country in any sort of public position if you toed the line, and were sort of lick-spittle.'**

**Do you think something very radical needs to be done about the relationship between the City of London and British industry?**

I think the first radical thing that needs to be done is to the relationship between government and industry. I don't believe that continuously since the war we've had governments that have had as their sole objective the knackering of British industry. Most of the things that do harm to industry are done by ignorance rather than by ill-intent, but the fact of the matter is that both parties have always felt that they understood industry, and it's six-and-two-threes which of them is the more ignorant. Decisions are taken in government without any ability to think through the effects it will have on industry, and then when they have dire effects, we don't learn from them.

**But in general, you think that part of any programme of modernisation has to involve a new relationship between government and industry?**

Yes. I was asked by the Labour Party to comment on their views on industry. I'm not a supporter of the Labour Party, I'm not a supporter of any bloody party – at the present moment, like I guess two thirds of the bloody country, I feel myself disenfranchised. I can see things to vote against and I'm not too sure what the bloody hell I'm voting for, but that's my problem. But one of the things that I have pushed and pushed and pushed is that the DTI's views or the Industry Secretary's views should be taken into account when government decides on legislation in any area. I don't say it should take priority, but I know that in Japan, in Germany, even in America, certainly in France, one of the questions that is asked when some bright idea is snatched off the wall is, 'What will this do to our industrial competitiveness'. Anybody asks that here, and the line is that it's up to business – they have to adjust, they have to live in the environment we choose and if they don't they're not good enough.

**What stops you being a Labour supporter? How far do you think Labour has really changed?**

I like and admire Neil, I like and admire very much Gordon and John: I think, team for team, Labour have probably got a better front bench than the Conservatives. What stops me, I suppose, is the latent fear that I have had for many years, and the reason that I left Labour – I don't think the loony Left has gone away. I've seen the ability of the hard Left to take over, notwithstanding the democratic process. The difficulty with this is I don't see how they can prove that they are takeover proof, any more



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than ICI or anyone else can, to be honest.

But I do have a nightmare scenario, that the Labour Party gets in with a small majority, and at that stage no matter what the personal courage of the existing leaders, they will be being twisted by a small minority of people whose views I find anathema. All my experiences of the hard Left have been that it is anti-democratic and a bullyboy movement. I still believe in tolerance, and I believe in the right of people to hold different views – this is again one of the legacies of Thatcherism: that people aren't prepared to speak up.

**You think Thatcherism was authoritarian?**

Well, exactly. I also disliked another aspect of Thatcherism: you were only allowed to serve your country in any sort of public position if you toed the line, and were sort of lick-spittle.

**So where does someone like you, who feels politically disenfranchised, go? Where do your political hopes go in the next few years?**

Well, as you know, I was a founding supporter of the SDP at a time when, again, you got punishment for being a member of the SDP. I don't mind that but I think it's a little bit sad, on the basis that I didn't think that Mrs Thatcher would live forever, and it seemed to me that at some stage she would go and I wanted there to be a moderate alternative. Now I didn't at that time believe that it would be possible to shift the Labour Party as far as I think the Labour Party has shifted.

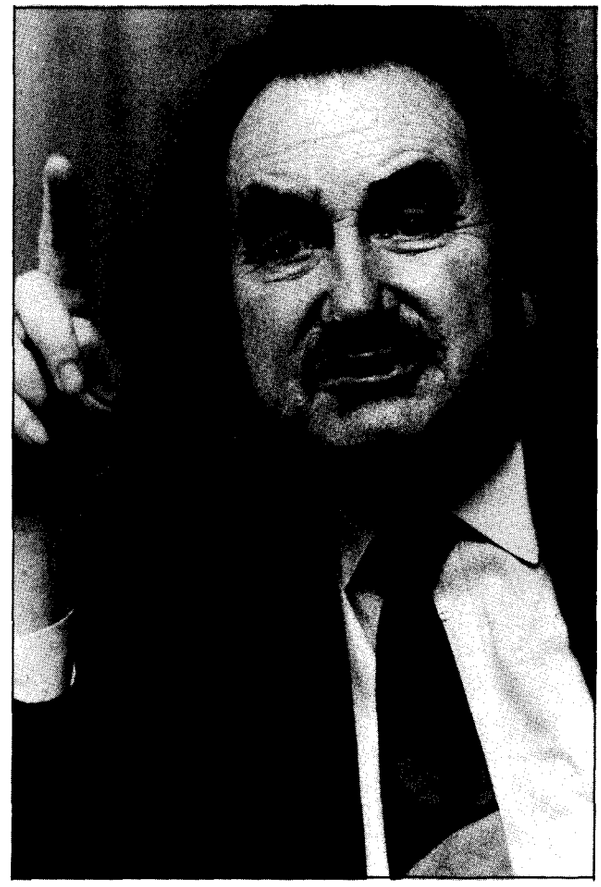
As far as an election is concerned I actually and genuinely am waiting for the night. There are certain things I believe in passionately – I believe passionately in Europe, I believe passionately in the need for industrial revival, and I believe passionately in the need to improve education and educational access in our country, and on the night I will have to make up my mind because things are still happening in all three of those areas. Incidentally, I don't think I'm such an oddball in that respect. I think there are a lot of people who feel that way.

**Let me ask you about Europe. How far do you think Britain's attitude to Europe has developed? How much further do you think it has to go, and what do you think are the main things that we should be learning from Europe?**

I think we have to do some major rethinking about Europe at the moment and I'm not yet very clear where this rethinking is going to take me. I've just spent quite a bit of time in eastern Europe, and to say eastern Europe is a problem is the understatement of the century.

I don't yet have a model in my mind as to how the new Europe is going to settle. Before the eastern thing I was a federalist, but I think the difficulty about being a federalist is that as soon as you say you are a federalist, everyone says, ho ho ho the United States of Europe, meaning the United States of America. And after all, the constitution of America was written in 1770 or whenever it was and if we can't do a bit better than that by now, we ought really to be taken away and shot. So we have to find new and better models of some sort of federal power, and I think if I had to choose one I'd probably choose the Swiss model rather than the American model. But that's neither here nor there.

**Harvey-Jones on his beliefs: 'I believe passionately in Europe, I believe passionately in the need for industrial revival, and I believe passionately in the need to improve education.'**



**Harvey-Jones on the public sector: 'The people in the public sector are not a weird bunch of asteroids who've suddenly landed from outer space, they're exactly the same as the rest of us.'**

**But definitely some sort of political union...**

I believe it is absolutely essential. Britain could either be the 51st state of the States, or we'd have to be a part of Europe, and I actually happen to think that in the one case we'd be joining somewhere which is over the top and going down, and in the other we're joining somewhere which has a chance of coming up. So I have no doubts where I am. I think an awful lot of the argument about Europe has been absolutely mind-boggling, weird.

We signed the Single European Act, and signing the Single European Act gave away our sovereignty, if you care about our sovereignty. I think sovereignty comes from economic strength. I'm not interested in having sovereignty in Pitcairn Island, trying to live off yams and coconuts or whatever we will be living on...

**But there is something distinctive about the British system, which is an Anglo-Saxon economy, it's not used to supervisory boards and strong links between banks and companies.**

Really? Where is the demonstration of the superiority of this marvellous Anglo-Saxon system which, incidentally, we're exporting to eastern Europe as fast as we can? What's the evidence of wealth creation and industrial success in our system which we're defending to the death, as against, say, the German or the Japanese system?

It's a slow, lingering death that we're in. I cannot see that the things that you have just listed are the sources of British greatness. You cannot be a great and a decent country without a level of economic power. And I'd kill you if you deduced from that that I think that wealth solves problems. I don't. If you've got a lousy system, more wealth merely makes it a bigger lousy system. But you've only got to look around you – there's barely a bloody problem in the country that doesn't need more money. Do you know what the capitation allowance is for books and things for kids at school? Two quid.

**Let me ask you about the public sector. There is a great crisis of the public sector, of its management, resources, and financing. It's quite inefficient. There is also a crisis of morale and service quality. If you were called in to Number 10 and told, 'Draw up a 10 point plan for modernising the public sector', what would it be?**



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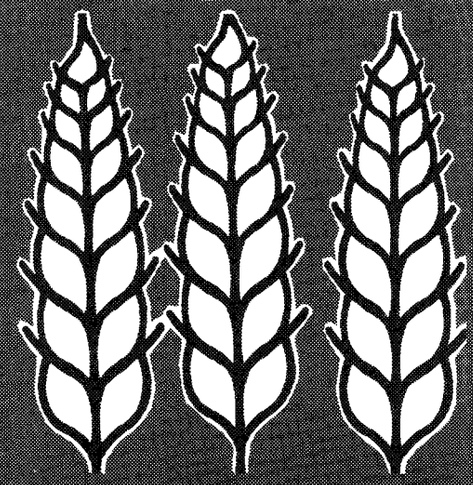

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First of all, don't write off the public sector, it is actually changing very, very fast. I meet a lot of public sector managers and I think much of the public sector is changing faster than other parts of our environment, largely because it hurts. You know, nothing changes in Britain unless there's pain. The trick is, if there's too much pain it doesn't change either, so there's got to be enough pain to make it hurt.

The people in the public sector are not a weird bunch of asteroids who've suddenly landed from outer space, they're exactly the same as the rest of us. They want to work in decent places where they've got pride in their work. There are a number of things we've done with the public sector which contribute to making it unwieldy and unmanageable. All our systems are about control and accountability, none are about releasing creativity, because we pay lousily, and we have hierarchies which stretch from here to John O'Groats and back. And we try and use alleged promotions as replacements for actual money, so we are grossly over-managed, grossly over-controlled, grossly under-directed. We have no vision of where we want to be or how we could be in a better world. The place is only run through the good will of dedicated people who are actually trying to break off some of the man-made shackles that have been put round them. I'm sorry about the emotion, but I feel that they're much more sinned against than sinning.

**What should we be doing about eastern Europe? Are we doing enough, particularly at a governmental level?**

We're doing too much in the wrong way and not enough in the right way. What we've done is flood the bloody place with carpet-baggers and consultants and economists. What they actually need are dirty muddy-booted old sods like me who can actually go in and help the poor bastards get their ducks in line.

**Harvey-Jones on eastern Europe: 'Throwing money at the situation is a total waste: trying to apply monetarism in the present situation is in my view almost criminal.'**

We've imported Thatcherism into countries which have no capital, no system, no accounts, nothing. The British know-how fund is OK, but it's tiny and it's almost entirely filled with consultants who wish to enrich themselves. What they badly need is a sort of British non-executive director in each company who's just a practical guy, who belongs to the company, who has the company's interests at heart and is trying to say 'look, starting with this god-awful mess, let's begin with this, and this is what we can do'. Throwing money at the situation at the moment is a total waste of money; trying to apply monetarism in the present situation is in my view almost criminal.

**You obviously care quite passionately about British society, and you obviously have a vision of it...**

Well, that was the other thing I disliked about Mrs T, I think she increased the divisiveness and polarisation of our society just when we were getting over it. It made it less open, less tolerant, but I also think it increased envy and it created all sorts of values – like the only thing that mattered was whether you had money.

**Do you have political ambitions?**

No way, no way!

**But shouldn't someone like you who comes from an industrial background, be prepared to bridge the gap. . .**

Come on, there is absolutely no evidence that business people make good politicians, and a hell of a lot of evidence that politicians make ghastly business people. And the reason is that we're motivated by different things. I'm motivated by a burning wish to make something happen, politicians are motivated by a burning wish to hold onto power – it's not the same thing.●

*Charlie Leadbeater is industrial editor of the Financial Times.*


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# Sales Slump Shock!

The tabloids are in long-term decline. **Roy Greenslade**, until recently editor of the *Daily Mirror*, explains why and warns that it is no cause for celebration

There are worrying signs of glee on the Left at the decline of the tabloids. The downward trend has become so obvious that most media correspondents have charted the fall and fall of Britain's popular press more than once during the past 12 months.

There is indeed a recognisable long-term decline and, unsurprisingly, a steep sales drop in the last 12 months attributed to the recession. Those suffering most are *The Sun*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Star* and their Sunday cousins.

Editors and proprietors are abnormally concerned with their poor circulations and the wisest among them correctly grasp the true importance of the situation. As one editor told me, the loss of buyers does not merely hit the pocket.

By their nature, popular papers cannot afford to become unpopular: their raison d'être is to sell millions every day. After all, if sensational content can be justified at all then the purveyor must be able to point to the overwhelming public demand for it. If the masses do not buy the tabloids how do owners and editors justify what detractors refer to as outrageous misbehaviour and supporters regard as healthy impertinence?

There are a lot of opponents, for these are the newspapers which have offended the aristocracy, the upper class, the chattering class, the middle class and the vanguard of the working class. Politicians of all parties would delight in the opportunity to muzzle them.

Instead the politicians compromised by setting up the Calcutt Inquiry, accepting its recommendations and allowing, by the creation of a self-regulating Press Complaints Commission, a sort of 'last chance saloon' for the tabloids.

It is generally accepted that Calcutt and parliament were heeding the warnings from the serious broadsheets worried at the threat to press freedom if laws were enacted. In part, that touches on the reason I began by suggesting that any sign of glee at the tabloids' tribulations is 'worrying'. Offending the top layers of society is not, of itself, justification for allowing newspapers to be curbed. Just the opposite.

There is also no doubt that the shock of Calcutt's report has affected the content and conduct of the tabloids. Even the venal *Sunday Sport* has toned down a little.

But I am getting ahead of the story here. Let us consider the figures, both long and short-term. Overall, there has been a massive decline in daily tabloid circulations over a prolonged period. In 30 years the total has fallen from 14.4m to 11.5m in August this year.

Long gone are those days of competing giant circulations in the 60s with the *Daily Express* reaching more than 4.3m in 1961 and the *Daily Mirror* reaching 5.25m in 1967. Even at its most successful, in the late 1980s, *The Sun* only managed 4.3m and recently it has been averageing 3.7m. The latest figures for the *Daily Mirror* are disastrous: it has lost more than 6% in a year (239,000 copies) and has been performing worse than *The Sun* in the past six months. Only by combining its figures with its Scottish sibling, the *Daily Record*, does the *Mirror* look at all healthy, and the *Record*'s claim to be Scotland's working-class bible has taken a slight knock with some erratic sales recently.

The *Daily Star*, launched over 10 years ago and at its peak selling more than 1.5m, has sometimes promised to take off again but it is now limping along with 850,000 sales.

It is the year-on-year decline for *The Sun* and the *Mirror* which cannot be ignored. In two years, between them, they have lost almost one million sales.

The middle market trio have had mixed fortunes, and cannot be said to have made significant gains at the expense of their down-market rivals. The *Daily Mail* has put on circulation and the *Daily Express*, which has declined so badly over the years it regards a plateau as a reason to celebrate, has also started to rise a little. Recent gains for both could probably be shown to have come from the ailing *Today*, itself proof of the middle-market not being expansionist.

True, the quality broadsheets – with one new title and innovative supplements – have increased their market. But the improved figures are slight when compared to the tabloid losses. So idealistic theories of the tabloid masses being converted to broadsheets appear therefore to be without foundation.

The story is similar for the Sundays, whose circulations were once truly gigantic. The *News Of The World*, which reached an 8m high in 1950, was regularly selling more than 6m throughout the 60s at a time when the *Sunday Pictorial* (now the *Mirror*) and the *People* were chalking up sales of over 5m.

Now the *News Of The World* is happy to sell 4.8m while the *Sunday Mirror* is currently selling 2.85m and the *People* – a paper which has suffered from more changes than a chameleon – is now down to 2.2m.

A couple of years ago it all looked so different and so promising for the tabloids. Having 'solved' their industrial relations problems, decamped from expensive headquarters in Fleet Street, conquered technological teething problems and brightened their pages with colour pictures, they thought that, in sales terms, the sky would be the limit.

Then came the recession, and the long-term decline suddenly accelerated into a downward spiral. These new circulation declines took editors and proprietors by surprise earlier this year and it is clear that most, if not all, are ignoring worries about the long-term trend. Their response has been cost-cutting and redundancies: in other words, a battening down of the hatches until the recessionary storm passes.

But are we watching a phenomenon which is due only to the recession? Should we not consider instead the possibility of other factors, even to the extent of a profound cultural change?

To attribute the decline totally to the recession appears to be too glib an answer. True, at the popular end of the market, where papers cost 25p, money is scarcest. Either people are not buying a paper at all or they have stopped buying more than one title.

It is also the case that the fall of circulation revenue and a marked decline in advertising revenue lead to smaller papers with fewer pages and less editorial space, in turn alienating readers who feel they are not getting value for money.

The cycle takes another spin, of course, because loss of profit leads to cuts in editorial and promotion budgets. Yet again, these 'savings' affect the content and imperil circulation.

In advertising-speak, newspapers are the fastest moving of their beloved Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) and so, it is argued, this trend is unsurprising and therefore not too worrying. Optimists holding to this view believe that the move out of recession will quickly restore sales.

**The weakness in this analysis is that it** ignores the underlying trend over the past three decades, and it suggests that former readers will be wooed back after they have lost their habit of buying papers.



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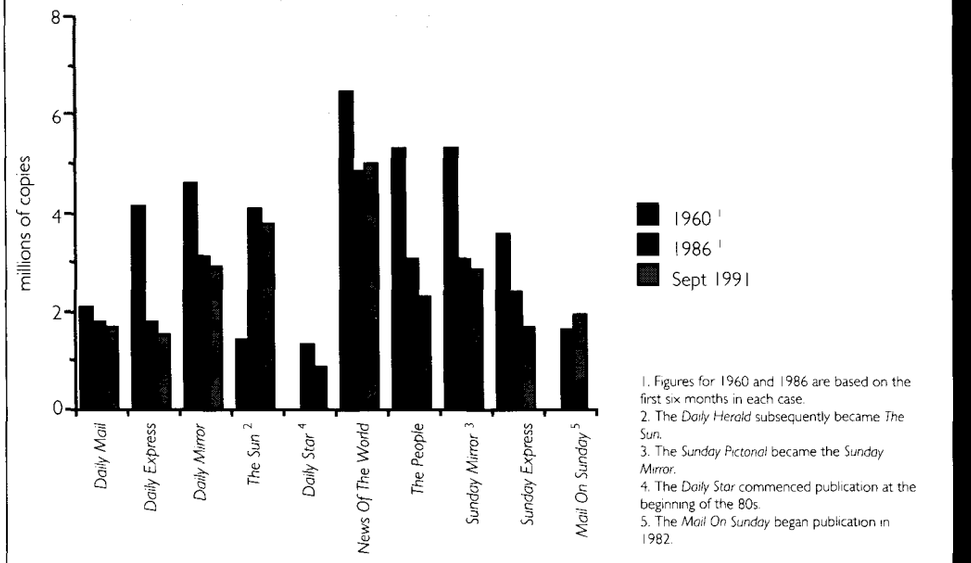
**The Sales Of Popular Newspapers, 1960-1991**




1. Figures for 1960 and 1986 are based on the first six months in each case.
2. The *Daily Herald* subsequently became *The Sun*.
3. The *Sunday Pictorial* became the *Sunday Mirror*.
4. The *Daily Star* commenced publication at the beginning of the 80s.
5. The *Mail On Sunday* began publication in 1982.

Many 'experts' have made a tentative stab at factors other than the recession, though I think we can dispense with the theory of one over-tired journalist who told me it's all the fault of modern paper boys and girls: they want too much money and they get up too late!

While we are at it, let's also dispense with an increase in the number of people driving to work and, most bizarre of all, the greenhouse effect. Sunbathing and newspaper-reading are said to conflict!

Instead, we should consider the following, beginning with education. According to *The Independent*'s Michael Leapman, one of the major reasons for the tabloid slump 'that is unlikely to be reversed' is 'an increasingly literate population'.

But is that assertion true? In the most recent survey on literacy among the young, some 15 months ago, it was found that one in four school-leavers experience reading difficulties.

It is obvious that newspapers depend on literacy as a basic skill and it is essential for tabloids to win new, young readers among the working class. Illiteracy – especially with a falling birth rate – is hardly a firm foundation on which to build future readership.

I believe falling educational standards are crucial to understanding why fewer people read newspapers.

**Television**: this too is complex. Tv was predicted to be the killer of papers some 40 years ago. Perhaps it has taken longer than expected. Perhaps it is tabloid papers' own saturation coverage and parasitical relationship with television which has rebounded on them.

People now regularly cite tv as their main news source and audiences have been boosted by innovations such as Ceefax/Oracle, 24-hour broadcasting and satellite stations.

Tabloids made immense efforts to print more copies at the outbreak of the Gulf war and were forced back to their normal circulations within a week. Television won that battle hands down.

**'If the masses do not buy the tabloids how do owners and editors justify what detractors refer to as outrageous misbehaviour'**

We cannot deny the enormous and growing influence of television, which itself might be a major contributor to the failure of the young to read as much as they used to.

**Saturation**: British people have historically bought more papers per head of the population than almost anywhere else in Europe or America. This has meant, in practice, families buying two or three titles every day – especially on Sunday. There has undoubtedly been a reversal of that trend.

Sophisticated or apathetic readers are now more discriminating in their choice of paper, acting at last on that age-old whinge: 'The trouble with the papers is they're all the same'. Again, advertising analysts believe this is only a recessionary problem. I would argue that – to use favourite advertising jargon – it is an expression of choice by a 'mature market' and therefore *not* a short-term factor.

**Constraint**: A number of tabloid editors believe readers have stopped buying as a direct result of the clean-up in the wake of the Calcutt report.

Their argument is straightforward: when papers gave the people what they wanted, regardless of constraints, people bought them. In other words, readers want uninhibited kiss and tell stories; unexpurgated serialisations of sexy books; uncensored pictures of young royals relieving themselves in public; unregulated freedom to publish anything which interests the public.

A central plank of Calcutt's self-regulation initiative was that editors should draw up their own code and then obey it. In consequence, say some editors, readers find the present products too bland, too safe, too boring to buy.

However, I find this far from convincing. The give-'em-what-they-want *Sunday Sport* has also seen its initial circulation success reversed, falling by almost 50% to around 300,000. The fact that it is now selling every day has not influenced its sales position.

What we can discount is any idea that readers are deserting because they have stopped believing in the editorial content. Just the reverse.

When I conducted a televison survey outside a newsagent's two years ago all tabloid readers – *all*, without exception – told me they didn't mind the fact that many of the stories they were reading might be untrue. They knew where fact and fiction departed and enjoyed reading them anyway.

**Reaction against gimmicks**: The 1980s were marked by tabloids outbidding each other in promotional games offering ever-increasing prizes. The introduction of bingo in the *Daily Star* in 1980, with relatively modest prizes, led within five years to £1m bingo.

There is no doubt that these games attracted thousands of players and massive interest. People openly admited they were buying papers 'for the bingo'. But the most recent of such promotions, in which the *The Sun* offered a prize of £7m in a Spot The Ball game prior to last year's World Cup, failed to boost circulation. In the end, the game was discontinued without a top prizewinner.

Failing to fulfil the dreams of the players naturally leads to public cynicism. If the performance doesn't match the promise then, inevitably, people won't 'be caught' by buying a paper merely to play an unwinnable game.

Gimmicks, by their nature, have to be new – or packaged as new – to succeed. It is now obvious that bingo, for instance, is played only by older readers. Published winners in *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* are almost always pensioners. It conclusively proves that these games are not attracting that audience of young readers who are vital to mass market growth.

**Political change**: Thatcherism created a sense of economic and political confidence among the aspirant working class. Papers like *The Sun* and the *Daily Star* benefited from this. Readers, anxious to reinforce their political change of heart, enjoyed reading of the collapse of union power; the possibilities of home and share-ownership (*The Sun* even started a money page towards the end of the 80s); and the chances for retail spending.

All of this has vanished within the past year: confidence has vanished and with it the old certainties promoted so successfully by *The Sun*. Even their heroine has been put out to pasture.

This has not been translated into a positive Kinnockite crusade, hence the failure of the Labour-supporting *Daily Mirror* to inherit *The Sun*'s former mantle. Catching the mood of the work-



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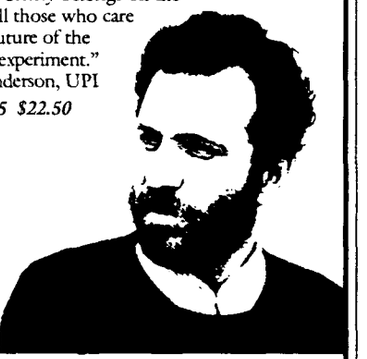

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ing class, as *The Sun* undoubtedly did for years, is no easy trick.

What serendipidity it was for Rupert Murdoch to be in the right place at the right time with successive editors, each perfectly tuned to the public mood at the respective time of their editorships.

Now *The Sun* has run into sand... for the moment. Without doubt, the recession has a lot to answer for, and I am sure that as we ride out of the recession – whenever that is – we can expect to see tabloid sales go up again.

They are, however, extremely unlikely to return even to the pre-recession heights: that underlying downward trend is inexorable. Many people might be heartened by this, though I don't share the contempt for mass market papers shown by so many.

**As a working-class youngster I learned a** great deal about the world by reading my parent's *Daily Mirror*, which was the only paper to appear in our house. Among other things, it offered me a window into the adult world in language I could understand.

At a time when television was in its infancy, and we were among the vast majority without one, I was able to read about international and domestic events through its reporters' and editors' eyes. And unlike television, there were non-consensual views to enjoy as well.

It was presented in a way I found easy to grasp and enabled me to look further afield for answers to questions I might never have known even to task. Furthermore, the paper probably added to my vocabulary, especially when reading, say, William Connor's Cassandra column.

**'Tabloids made immense efforts to print more copies at the outbreak of the Gulf war and were forced back to their normal circulations within a week'**

That's all very well, you might retort, but Gary Bushell, the voice of *The Sun* until a month ago when he joined the *Daily Star*, is a horse of a very different colour – and the 1990s *Sun* ain't the 50s *Mirror*.

Laying aside the argument about freedoms, to exercise choice, to publish (and its corollary, to offend), let us consider instead the fact that even when they are not trying, indeed *especially* when they're not trying, the tabloids can actually help those at the bottom of the educational ladder.

To my knowledge, no-one has measured newspaper-reading's effect on a society's literacy standards, but I'll stick my neck out and suggest, at the very least, that it has been a positive benefit.

Moreover, the tabloids offer information which is invaluable to its audience. The sensational packaging and monosyllabic opinion might offend sophisticated chatterers but its existence is what counts.

Does Bleeding Heart of NW1 really think that Sunspeak is similar to a biblical text for *Sun* readers? That Gary Bushell's views are shared by all or most who read him? Surely, cause and effect is too simplistic a notion to advance as an argument against tabloids. Even the voting preferences of *Sun* readers – 42% vote Tory while 43%, in spite of the Sun's trenchant bias, vote Labour, give a lie to such crude analysis.

The point of this sudden polemic is to counteract the wave of happiness at the tabloids' demise: not reading *The Sun* is not necessarily an advantage if people are not reading at all.

Voltaire has rarely been called up as a witness for *The Sun*, and it may be a little melodramatic to suggest facing a firing squad outside Wapping, but the sense of the philosopher's sentiment is one we should not be ashamed to adopt: you may disapprove of *The Sun* but you should defend to the death its right to exist.

If the gradual death of the tabloids is because a better educated working class is rejecting the sensationalist formula then so be it, but there is no such proof.

What we might worry about meanwhile is whether our education system is failing us or whether television is making reading and writing redundant activities. Now that would be a profound cultural change to address. Literacy is not only the lifeblood of the newspapers. It is a measure of the health of the society in which those papers exist. In the circumstances it might be better if more, rather than fewer, people were taking the tabloids.●


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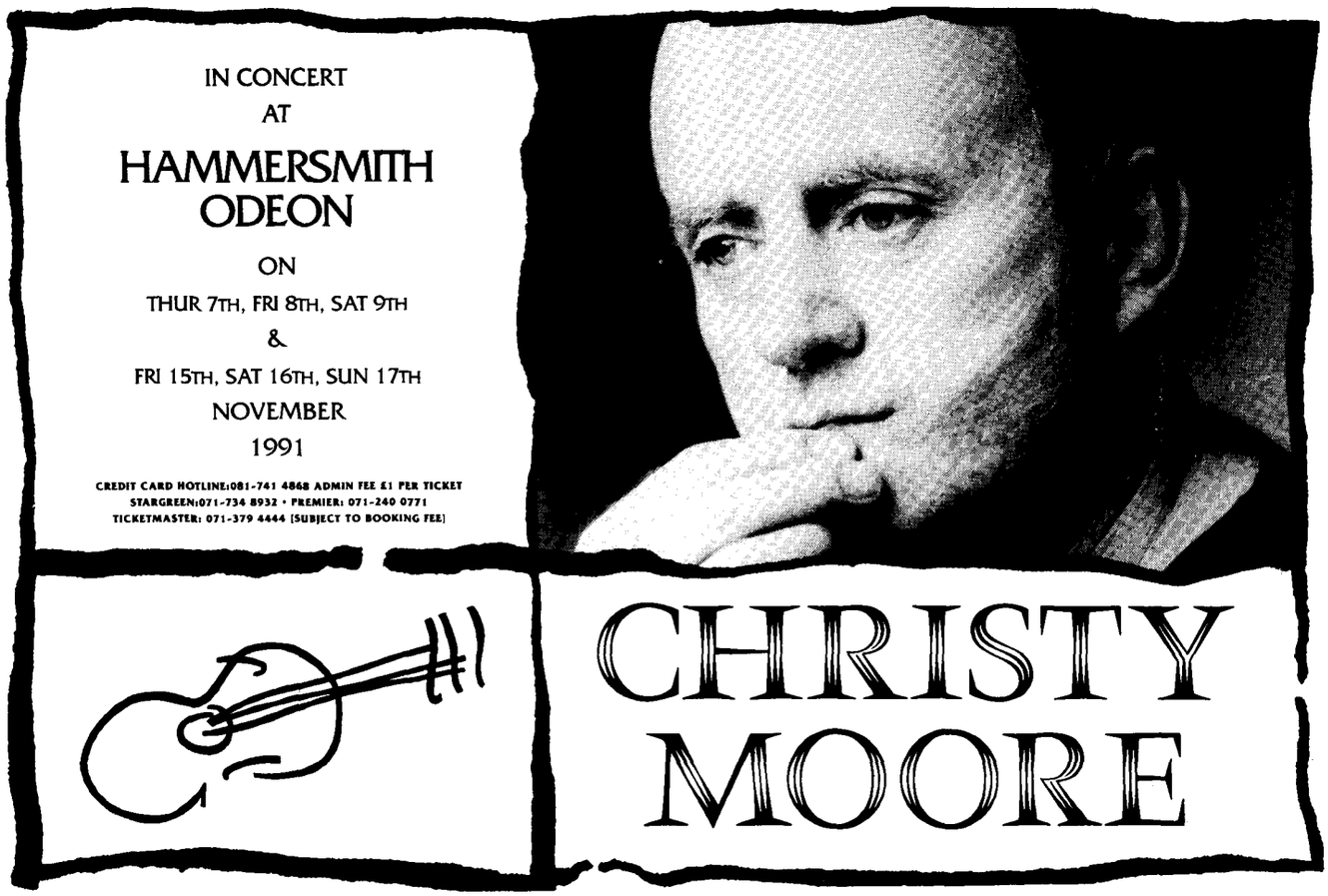





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# The End Of The Future

The collapse of the communist tradition has affected the whole of the Left. **Göran Therborn** explores why

Petrograd of world war one and of the October Revolution, and Leningrad of the nazi siege and of the stalinist 'affairs' are reverting to St Petersburg of the tsars, their belle époque, and their Bloody Sunday. The failure of the socialist effort which sprang from the Petrograd uprising in 1917 has been officially recognised by Gorbachev, the first legitimate heir to the legacy of the revolution. The return of St Petersburg signals the end of an epoch, but what epoch? The era of communism, certainly, the end of socialism, likely, at least in its classical sense from the late Marx and Engels and from the Second International.

But probably also the end of the future – as a new place which might be visited. That is, the end of the epoch of futures of progressive, emancipatory revolution or reform, the era of radical modernity opened up by the French Revolution. (It was only after the French Revolution that the words revolution and reform lost their restorative or cyclical connotations and came to mean the opening up of a new future.) Communism was felled in the name of the normalcy of the Western European/North American present, and when the frustrations of a marketised present start mounting, the main tendency is to hark back to the past glory of one's nation. In 1989-90 there were many sympathetic observers in the West, who analogised the resurgent past as '1848' or 'the springtime of peoples'. Today, the break-up of the Soviet Union and of Yugoslavia looks more reminiscent of a re-emergence of tribalism.

The recent events in eastern Europe might be interpreted as a putting into place of a material infrastructure to the culture of post-modernism. The auction of the heritage of the political vanguards accompanies in style the dissolution of the modernist avant-gardes. (Most of the latter were also associated with the former, from say, Picasso and Neruda to Nono and Godard.)

But whatever has happened, history has not stopped, and the future may return as a horizon of major collective orientations. Instead of further musing into cultural history, let us take a look at the Left, stranded in the new St Petersburg.

**From the vantage point of Peter/** Petrograd/Leningrad we may distinguish at least three Lefts. The Classical Communist, the believer in, the defender of the Soviet Union as the product of the epochal October Revolution. (The variants of the species run a gamut from the 'true believers' to critical eurocommunists, trotskyists, maoists or communisant ex-communists.) The Anti-Communist Social Democratic Left, which historically is rather pre- than anti-communist and not always vehemently anti either, but which we will here look at from an anti-communist angle in order to focus on the now ending era of the October Revolution. Thirdly, there is the Neo-Classical Left which is primarily anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-capitalist, and which has seen communism and the Soviet Union as a possible, but variably respectable or disreputable ally in the anti struggles. To a considerable extent this last-mentioned Left joined communist parties, at least for some time. But its relation to the USSR was always different from that of the Classical Communist, usually more critical, always much more detached. Each type has its major typical North and South, male and female variants.

The current situation of the Left in this new historical situation may be gauged by sketching a historical evolution of the three main types of Left.

**Is there anything to add about the his-**torical role of the Classical Communist to the admission of ultimate failure by the last general secretary of the CPSU? Yes, three main points. First, in terms of socio-economic development, the era of communist power was not simply a failure. On the contrary, for some time it was a success. (This argument is substantiated in a forthcoming article of mine in the *New Left Review*.)

Secondly, success or failure is not a moral criterion, not even an unambiguous political one. The communist tradition was one of struggle, of class struggle, anti-fascist struggle, anti-imperialist, anti-racist struggle. That made it awkward in times of peaceful administration. The tradition fostered a particular hardness and harshness, which could and usually did become fatally cruel in positions of power. On the other hand, the tradition of struggle for the causes of universal emancipation also attracted and spawned human compassion, selfless devotion, and civil courage. A low-keyed example of this heroic tradition was recognised in, of all places, Germany a few months ago. The Ruhr town of Gladbeck (80,000 inhabitants) awarded the leader of the Communist group in the town council, Erika Köhn, the highest distinction of the town, 'for particular merit'. (A similarly respected contingent of Classical Communists can also be found in at least one other Ruhr town, Bottrop, with 115,000 inhabitants (*Die Zeit*, July 26).

Thirdly, the critical hopefuls did turn out right, in one important sense. Politically and ideologically, the communist movement did finally prove its capacity to change, from dogmatism, authoritarianism, and brutality into intellectually vibrant, democratic socialism. The CPSU did at last produce Gorbachev, Yeltsin, Shevarnadze, Yakovlev and others; the SED (East German Communist Party) Hans Modrow and Gregor Gysi. The Hungarian and the Slovene CPs embarked upon the road to multi-party systems from their positions of single power. In western Europe many of the CPs were, in the end, completely destalinised, earliest and most thoroughly in Sweden (since 1964), most significantly in Italy.

But with the implosion of the USSR and communist eastern Europe, the Classical Communist is now leaving the historical stage, becoming merely a figure of historiography, like the Wobbly and the anarcho-syndicalist before him or her.[1] Evaluating his/her role and performance is likely to occupy a good deal of the next generation of historians. But a provisional assessment is necessary for a political stock-taking of the present.

**On several fundamental issues the Anti-**Communist Left was more right than the other Lefts. It was right in insisting on electoral democracy and in warning against the dire consequences of dismissing or trampling it. It was right in its awareness of the enormous human cost of revolutions and in warning against any playing with fire, however heroic, however justified the moral outrage. It was right in defining the socialist, or left, endeavour first of all in terms of a set of universalistic values to be realised, rather than as the establishment of a set of institutions (such as a new state apparatus and public property). The realisation of values does require institutions. But whereas the former perspective easily allows for values operating as critical criteria for



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evaluating and further changing institutions, the latter smoothly lends itself both to obscure possibilities of change in capitalist societies and the avoidance of the critical scrutiny of *a priori* socialist institutions.

Those points are now conceded by most of the survivors of the other Lefts, at least implicitly. So, this should be a moment of triumph for the mainstream Anti-Communist Left. But obviously it is not. Why? Briefly put, because the Lefts were more dependent on each other than any of them ever realised.

Classical Communism and the main Anti-Communist Left, social democracy/labourism, had a common base in European-type industrial class societies and their workers' movements. That base is now eroding within Europe, overtaken by other capitalist social configurations, such as USA and Japan, which were never industrial class societies to the same extent as Europe[2], and will never be reproduced in the Third World. But there was also something more, a dialectical interdependence between the Lefts.

There was, on one hand, a negative dialectic, a negative spiral of power, power abuse, polarisation, and further power abuse etc. This mutually destructive dialectic characterised the relationships between social democrats and communists from the beginning to the end of the Weimar Republic. The cold war reproduced it on an international scale. Now that the archives are being opened up, we learn it *was* true that Western spies and saboteurs were sent into the communist camp, also from social democratic Norway and Sweden. Not only the ruling CPs had their political police but also the Scandinavian social democratic parties set up their own secret networks of political surveillance, parallel to, but in cooperation with, selected parts of ordinary military civilian police intelligence. While political dismissals were massive in eastern Europe in 1972, Willy Brandt took the initiative of officially banning all 'radicals' from any ordinary public employment in West Germany. And state terrorism has occured not only as a product of embattled revolutions, but also of comfortable state reformism, such as the French killing of Greenpeace activists in New Zealand, not to speak of the Algerian and other colonial wars.

The positive dialectic was more a possibility than an actuality, but on a local scale it was recognised recently by the social democratic rulers of the Ruhr towns mentioned above, and on a supernational level, East-West, North-South, it did operate tacitly. The forces of struggle and militancy – or the threat of revolution – can provide important, sometimes decisive, power to the reformist negotiators and administrators against the forces of capital and privilege. Practical reformists can provide channels for redress to movements of protest. Mutual criticisms by the revolutionary visionary and the reformist manager may sharpen the sight of both. The vagueness of the basic values of revisionist socialism acquired an historical concreteness through the existence of revolutionary institutions, however flawed. Abused and/or disillusioned communists could draw upon social democratic values in criticising communist institutions.

The last years of communism saw deliberate attempts to turn the factual interdependence of communism and social democracy into a positive dialectic. In the West there were the contacts between the PCI and the German, French, and British social-democratic and labour parties. East-West, the Socialist International developed contacts with the 'reform communists' of eastern Europe. With the collapse of communism, that endeavour lost its meaning, but the interdependence of the left traditions showed itself again in the concomitant weakening and disorientation of social democracy. However, the social democratic Left is, course, the one least afflicted by the recent turns of world history – though anti-communism has lost its meaning.

**The Neo-Classical Left was the Left which** brought a new generation to the ageing Classical Lefts, which returned to the latter a vitality and vibrancy lost in the post-1945 boom of demonstrations, red flags, the International, Marx-reading and writing. It derived from the first International youth culture and the dramatic expansion of higher education, and it sprang into action in support of the civil rights movement in the US South, in opposition to the Vietnam war and outgrown educational structures, and in solidarity with liberation movements of the three continents of the Third World. It is testimony to the extent to which the epoch was defined by the poles of capitalism and socialism, that the most important political and ideological orientation of this young rebellion very soon became classical socialism and marxism. This was in spite of the fact that universal civil rights, national independence, mass possibilities of study, and an extended social space for youth culture and sexuality were the decisive concrete issues, rather than the classical issues of class distribution and power or, if you like, class exploitation and oppression.[3]

The turn to the classics of left-wing politics and theory is quite understandable. In the face of the force and inertia of the present, the classical tradition offered strategic and analytical perspectives and models clearly superior to the inchoate moralism and rebelliousness of the new Left. The beacons of the Third World, from Che and Fidel to Ho and Mao, all spoke the classical idiom. Marxism constituted a rich intellectual legacy, mainly untapped in Western social disciplines. The rise and early maturation of the Neo-Classical Left further happened to coincide with the climax of industrial society in the West[4] and with the historical high plateau of working-class and labour movement economic and political influence around 1980.

Ater the initial yields from reading *Capital* were harvested, however, its neo-classicism became a major limitation of the Neo-Classical Left. The neo-classical optic rendered it ignorant of concrete conditions and current tendencies in eastern Europe, and obscured its vision of the emergent post-industrial capitalism. It blinded it to the cost of autarchy and the problems of administrative incapacity so that it has been knocked off the centre of its own preferential field of empirical investigation and advice, Third World development. It also prevented probings into the functioning of markets and their relationship to universalistic left-wing goals.

**'The era of industrial working-class socialism, which saw itself as a continuation of the French Revolution has closed for ever'**

The absorption of much of the classical left traditions has also meant that the collapse of communism has been received as more of a blow by the Neo-Classical Left, than its actual distance from eastern Europe had warranted. On the other hand, its survivors look far from a spent force. Their sensitive cultural ears have always kept them more or less tuned into, at least, the cultural evolution of contemporary societies. Their core values of universalistic solidarity have become increasingly pertinent in a situation of mounting ethnic conflicts and xenophobia.

This has been mainly some ruminations on the summer that was and on the autumn fruit it bore, with little fear of a coming winter, nor rejoicing in the spring to come. The epoch opened up by the French Revolution of the future as a New Place, another society, has been closed – for the time being. The era of industrial working-class socialism, which saw itself as a continuation of the French Revolution has closed for ever. So has the communist tradition from the October Revolution.

I guess my main point is that the ending of those eras both should and can be reflected upon with serenity – as an intake of new energy. Like mature autumn fruit. The Left is likely to be refounded and reconstituted, other things being equal, the earlier the classical and the Neo-Classical Lefts take full notice of the turn of season. In the meantime, the struggles of protest and reform go on, against the usual suspects.●

*Göran Therborn is professor of sociology at Gothenberg University*

**1. True, the post-communisation of China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Cuba has not yet happened. But the increasing frailty of the revolutionary generation *still in tenure seems irreversible*.**
**2. That is, they never had a pattern of employment even relatively dominated by industrial work. Instead they went straight from agrarian to services domination.**
**3. Major strikes in boom-tight labour markets did accompany the youth rebellion in some countries, but they and their issues were more experienced as supporting and confirming the radical oppositional stance, than as the reason for the latter.**
**4. Industrial employment in the OCED area peaked historically in the period from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s.**



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# Balkanisation Or Lebanisation?

The downside of 1989 is Yugoslavia. It shows how things can go disastrously wrong. And it also reveals how ineffectual Europe can be. **Branka Magas** explains what is at issue

Select

Balkanisation denotes the break-up of a larger state into several smaller ones, the word normally used in a derogatory sense implying that smaller states are less viable than large ones. Being a citizen of a country created out of the wreckage of Austria-Hungary – then the second largest state on the European contnent – it has always puzzled me why the Habsburg state itself was not perceived as unviable, given that it broke up in the first place. And there is the question of how large is large? Compared to Canada or China, Great Britain is a small country. Compared to Great Britain, Holland is small indeed. Yet if you question this assumption about the privileged link between size and viability in regard to Yugoslavia, you will only hear mutterings about the irrationality of nationalism.

The secret of Austria-Hungary's dissolution, of course, is shrouded in the circumstances of world war one. Its demise being a fact of history, no one feels obliged today to know anything about its internal strains and conflicts. But what if a state breaks up when the rest of the continent is at peace? In the case of Yugoslavia, failure to understand the reasons for its break-up is treated almost as a mark of intellectual respectability. Who, after all, can understand the irrationality of nationalism? 'Ethnic wars', 'the Balkan cauldron', 'centuries of national intolerance', 'the Theodosian division', etc, are some of the stereotypes used to veil not only ignorance but also lack of interest in this first continental war since 1945. Yet this war could turn out to be a major all-European tragedy as well.

In an article published two and a half years ago in *New Left Review*, I wrote about the spectre of Balkanisation haunting Yugoslavia. It seemed obvious to me already then that the policy of Milosevic's regime towards the 2m strong Albanian nation in Yugoslavia was leading inexorably towards the



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country's break-up. Unpalatable as the prospect was, it was necessary to face it. Yugoslavia, after all, could stay together only be respecting, and building upon, the postwar political settlement based on full national equality. Take away Albanian national rights, and the whole thing comes down like a pack of cards.

**How many cards? According to my calculation,** the number has always been eight: the six republics (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) and two provinces (Kosovo and Vojvodina) that made up the Yugoslav federation. To my mind, there is no doubt that these eight federal units are the only legitimate political subjects (assuming, of course, their own democratic constitution). In the event of Yugoslavia's break-up, they are its only rightful successors.

Since the mid-1980s, though, other counts have been made. Thus in 1985, Vojislav Seselj – now leader of the Serbian Chetniks and a member of the Serbian parliament – was sent to prison for producing a map of Yugoslavia containing only four units: Croatia, Greater Serbia, Macedonia and Slovenia. Since that time Seselj has added Macedonia and a large part of Croatia to his Greater Serbia. A few years later, the Slovene youth paper *Mladina* scandalised official Serbia and the army by dividing Yugoslavia into two parts: western and eastern, the former including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia, the latter being allocated the remainder. There were others. Maps of Greater Croatia and Greater Albania also appeared (albeit in these cases published abroad). Some Slovenes started to throw wistful glances at the Croatian peninsula of Istria. Kosovo's decision to declare itself a republic in its own right (winter 1990) – in response to the Serbian assembly's unilateral and unconstitutional alteration of the province's status within Serbia and Yugoslavia – did not alter the total number of constituent elements (and the Kosovars explicitly emphasised their continued membership of the Yugoslav federation); but implicit in their decision was the *right* (enjoyed by the republics) of unilateral secession from Yugoslavia.

By the time of the break-up of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (spring 1990), maps of various kinds were openly circulating throughout the country, the vast majority of them marking the borders of a Greater Serbia incorporating all Yugoslavia bar Slovenia and a much-reduced Croatia. In Belgrade, countless volumes and articles have been published arguing the imperative need to unite all 'historic and ethnic Serb lands' into a single state. What was special about the Greater Serbian project was that it was not only backed by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (in the notorious 1986 Memorandum), but also officially endorsed by the Serbian regime. No other republican government has sought a redrawing of Yugoslavia's internal borders. A tentative suggestion by Croatian president Franjo Tudjman, in July 1991, that Bosnia-Herzegovina might be divided up between Croatia and Serbia was promptly drowned by a chorus of disapproving voices raised both in Croatia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Sanctity of the internal borders has remained the official policy of Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

**Yugoslavia: The Six Republics And Two Provinces**

What about the provinces? In April 1991, Slovenia and Croatia proposed a loose confederation of six units – ie, of the six republics – thus making clear that the fate of Vojvodina and Kosovo was Serbia's internal matter. Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia concurred in the idea that there were six that counted. But in the event, of course, all these hypothetical tricks were trumped by Milosevic's Great Serbian card. And the joker in the pack turned out to be the Yugoslav army.

**'The Yugoslav house of cards has not only collapsed – but the cards themselves have become damaged in the process'**

**As I write these lines (October 1991), the** Great Serbian plan is being implemented by force of arms. Slovenia has been practically expelled from Yugoslavia, after an attempted occupation. A total war is being waged against Croatia, involving mass destruction of its economic infrastructure and civilian habitat; one third of its territory is now under occupation and most of the population driven out. In Vojvodina and Kosovo, the earlier extensive institutions of self-government – which had made the two provinces virtually equal to the republics – have been destroyed, leaving them with less powers than are enjoyed by a London borough. In Kosovo, this could be achieved only by military force. Montenegro has been practically annexed by Serbia, producing a state of incipient civil war in the republic. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, central government has disintegrated as a result of the Serbian-dominated army's decision to build up Serb-inhabited areas into bastions of its war effort against Croatia. In the south, Macedonia's fate remains highly uncertain, with threats against Macedonian 'secessionists' filling the pages of Serbia's official press. The Yugoslav house of cards has not only collapsed – but the cards themselves have become damaged in the process.

If Yugoslavia survived for a time (1987-91) by treating Kosovo and Vojvodina as Serbia's internal problem, the army's attack on Slovenia signed its death certificate. Since then the federal institutions, already much undermined, have been disintegrating at an accelerating pace. Symbolic of the current state of affairs is the recent missile attack on the offices of Franjo Tudjman, which almost killed not only the Croatian president but also the Yugoslav federal president, federal prime minister, and the federal foreign secretary – men who in order to reach Zagreb from Belgrade, had been forced to travel by way of Hungary!

A few days earlier, the latest – and final – in a series of constitutional coups against the Yugoslav state had been carried out, instaling an all-Serb body as the 'Yugoslav collective presidency'. To present Greater Serbia as Yugoslavia is an attractive option for the Serbian regime, with obvious economic and political advantages. Yet it turned out to be a major miscalculation so far as the outside world was concerned. Even the most obtuse European government now had to admit that Yugoslavia no longer existed. Why, then, is the deceased being buried so surreptitiously? Is it in order to prevent the sound of the ex-Yugoslav army's remorseless pounding of Croatia's cities and villages reaching the ears of the 'peacemakers' in The Hague?

The war being waged against Croatia is ostensibly to protect the Serb minority there, but in reality it is little more than a war of territorial conquest. Part of the preparations for it was an instrumentalisation of the Serb minorities living in neighbouring republics. Since August 1990 Serbia, with the military's support, has carved three so-called Krajinas out of Croatia, in two of which Serbs form a small minority of the population. Four such 'Krajinas' have also been established in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The plan is clear: to break up these two republics, by forming out of their territories an archipelago of Serb-inhabited islands tied to Mother Serbia. To be sure, the Serbian regime would never allow its own republic's parcelisation, despite the fact that it is ethnically the least homogeneous of Yugoslavia' republics. But if the Krajina recipe were to be followed consistently, the number of cards in play would climb vertiginously. Each municipality, town or village could become a 'Krajina'.

**The Krajina formula of 'self-**determination' for every minority, in other words, leads inexorably to the Lebanisation of Yugoslavia. This means



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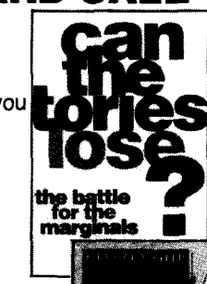


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the collapse of all central authority, and transfer of power into the hands of local warlords. In Croatia, where 80% of the population is Croat and where central government is still very much in control, this danger is at present not very great (though in the areas that form the war zone, Croat volunteers can be found fighting under their own command with only a tenuous link with the Croatian military authorities). On the Serbian side, on the other hand, in the so-called Krajinas, the fragmentation of military and political authority is far greater – and gaining speed. The mass destruction of the civilian habitat, the looting and killings conducted by Serb and Montenegrin irregulars, have dissolved all semblance of an ordered society. What will happen when this kind of war reaches into Bosnia-Herzegovina, given its ethnic configuration and the absence of a functioning central government?

The shape of things to come was revealed in early October, when units of Montenegrin reservists were sent into western Herzegovina to establish a base for subsequent occupation of the part of Croatia's coast around the city of Dubrovnik. Within hours of their arrival, the drunken men got down to looting local villages and shooting at civilian passers-by (killing two). Thousands of men, women and children were forced to flee their homes. Those who stayed behind have thrown up a line of barricades to keep the invaders out. The irregulars, after all, were publicly boasting that Bosnia-Herzegovina was no more and that this part of it was now Montenegro.

There can be no doubt that for Yugoslavia to fall apart along its federal seams is far more desirable than its fragmentation into a myriad of Krajinas. Balkanisation of Yugoslavia, in other words, is far preferable to its Lebanisation. Any fragmentation of Yugoslavia's republics and provinces into still smaller units would mean war becoming endemic in this part of Europe. In the face of this danger, the tardiness and conservatism of Europe's respnse to the war in Croatia can only be described as irresponsible. The British governemnt's position that a comprehensive settlement must be agreed by the warring parties before the international community can recognise the demise of Yugoslavia's borders verges on the absurd. After all, the Hague Conference was convened precisely because there is no longer a Yugoslav structure capable of negotiating such a settlement. Unless this fact is fully recognised – by freezing Yugoslavia's seat in the United Nations and recognising its constituent parts as soveriegn entities – the Serbian regime and the army will continue to use the shells of former federal institutions at home and abroad to pursue their destructive aims.

Has deceased Yugoslavia really left no last Will and Testament? Over the last four or five years, the entire constitutional underpinning of the postwar settlement of the national question in Yugoslavia has been destroyed bit by bit, until it would seem that we are left with nothing but a blank sheet upon which any regional tyrant can draw his own borders. Yet Europe would make a terrible mistake by disregarding, for the sake of a quick solution, the fundamental premises of the postwar settlement. The six republics *are* nation-states; their borders *are* state borders; the provinces *are* political subjects, distinct from Serbia proper. These eight federal units *are* the only rightful heirs of Yugoslavia and must be recognised as such. If, for ethnic or economic reasons, these eight units have an interest in creating a new association, then let it be done freely – for otherwise it will not work at all. Freedom to decide, however, involves removal of the army from the soil of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Kosovo. This can be achieved by prompt, consistent and principled political action by the EC and CSCE. If national minorities are seen as a problem during the period of transition, then international monitors can be sent to the relevant areas to observe the governments' compliance with internationally agreed standards. Any other approach will lead to the spread of war within Yugoslavia and beyond its borders.●

**'Any fragmentation of Yugoslavia's republics and provinces into still smaller units would mean war becoming endemic in this part of Europe'**

*Branka Magas is a member of the editorial collective of New Left Review*

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# Let Saigons Be Bygones

**Peter Wilson-Smith** asks whether Vietnam will go the same way as eastern Europe

Marcus Wilson-Smith

It is Saturday night in Saigon, as most people still call Ho Chi Minh City. The centre of town is crammed with fashionable young Saigonese, dressed in chic western-style clothes, hanging out on street corners or cruising the main avenues on bicycles or Honda motor bikes, the coveted status symbol of wealth in Vietnam. Two, sometimes three to a Honda, they cruise down Dong Khoi Street, better known in the French colonial days as Rue Catinat, down alongside the Saigon river and back up towards Le Loi Boulevard and the Rex Hotel.

From the roof-top bar of the Rex with its revolving, illuminated crown – familiar during the war years as a haunt of Western correspondents – an assortment of foreign business people and visitors sit with their drinks discussing business or perhaps the latest changes to the foreign investment laws, glancing occasionally at the spectacle below.

Vietnam today is a country of paradoxes. The collapse of communism in the Eastern bloc has left Vietnam, with a population of around 68m, the second largest marxist-leninist state in the world after China. Its elderly rulers can sometimes still be heard pronouncing on the threat to Vietnam from 'reactionary forces' or making token obeisance to the memory of Marx. No statues have been toppled here. And Vietnam remains a one-party state, run by a collective dictatorship.

But increasingly political ideology takes second place to economic reality. And the reality is that since the 6th party congress of 1986, when the policy of *doi moi* or renovation was first introduced, Vietnam has been undergoing an economic revolution which has gathered a momentum of its own. Vietnam today is rapidly turning into a nation of capitalists.

Tran Van Hung is a typical example. Aged 35, married with two children, he runs a little shop in the centre of Hanoi selling tvs, videos and cassettes. Before renovation he was a state worker earning the equivalent of about $10 a month. Now he earns four or five times that from his tv business even though he is in competition with 30 almost identical little shops in the same street. He buys the televisions from a state importer but the videos he sells are smuggled in, mainly through Cambodia. Hung sells a 14-inch remote control JVC colour tv for $270. Remarkably, in a country where gross domestic product per capita is estimated at only $200 a year, he sells about 10 televisions a week.

The economic reforms, a much-needed response to a disastrous legacy of state-planning and bureaucratic mismanagement of the economy, have ranged widely. Prices have been liberalised, a market-related exchange rate introduced, the private sector encouraged and subsidies to state industry cut. Foreign investment has also been promoted with some of the most liberal foreign investment rules of anywhere in the Third World.

The trend now seems irreversible and the reformers' hand was strengthened over the summer by the political changes during and since the 7th party congress held in June. The congress saw a big shake-up of the politburo involving the elevation of the solid, but reform-minded party stalwart Do Muoi to the post of general secretary and seven new entrants to the 13 man politburo, bringing the average age down from 71 to a sprightly 64 years old. Significantly, because the south of the country is richer and more economically advanced, the newcomers included several southerners while the new prime minister Vo Van Kiet is both



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a southerner and a leading advocate of reform.

About 90% of the retail sector in Vietnam is now privately owned and run and there is no shortage of consumer goods for those who can afford them. Nor are the Vietnamese embarrassed about the disparities in wealth which the market economy brings.

Nevertheless, there is still a desire to present the economic changes as part of a seamless web of socialist development in an attempt to reconcile change with the official state ideology and the role of the party. As one senior Hanoi official explains, it is not the teachings of Marx or Lenin which have been abandoned but rather stalinist policies of collectivisation and bureaucratic central planning, in favour of a market-oriented economy. Vietnam has learnt from its mistakes, but the goal remains socialism. 'We are now in a transitional period of state capitalism, which could last hundreds of years', he says.

Le Dang Doanh, deputy director of the Central Institute for Economic Management, an articulate economist and top-level government adviser who helped shape the policy of renovation, puts it slightly differently. Marx he points out was writing in a different time and the conception of socialism in Vietnam today is very different from when the Communist Party was formed in 1948. It is necessary, Doanh says, to live in the real world. 'It is an irreversible process, economic renovation, irresistible. It needed to be done and it will be implemented. The forces of reality are stronger than any bureaucracy.'

**The aim is to develop Vietnam's own brand** of market-based socialism. But the spectre which haunts Vietnam's leaders and which, perhaps more than anything, explains their need to reconcile the market economy with official state ideology, is what has happened in eastern Europe. For the challenge facing Vietnam is whether it can modernise its economy without suffering the social and political dislocation which has occurred in the Eastern bloc.

In this respect the position of the party is crucial. Although not held in the same disdain as in other former communist countries, the Communist Party in Vietnam, particularly at provincial level, often acts as an obstacle to change and a source of frustration to the younger reformers. In some areas it is still dominated by old cadres or corrupt bureaucrats who value their privileges and resist the demands for change from the centre. But at the same time, the party still permeates much of life in Vietnam. It is the eyes and ears of the state and the symbol of continuity and stability. For the older generation, too, the historical association between the party and the long war years fighting for independence remains strong. Indeed the roots of the Vietnamese Communist Party lie in the struggle for independence.

So despite the current pragmatism in economic policy, there is a reluctance to risk undermining the party by simply denying the ideology for which it has stood. Nor is there much sign of the party's monopoly on political power being speedily relaxed. There is talk of democratisation. Efforts are being made to give greater management freedom to state businesses, to bring in technocrats to positions reserved in the past for party bureaucrats and to hunt out corrupt officials. There are also moves to introduce a degree of separation between the party and the state. But political pluralism is not on the agenda.

In the eyes of Hanoi, the big mistake in the Soviet Union was to move ahead so fast with political reform before sorting out the economic problems. Vietnam is attempting the opposite: rapid economic reform while moving slowly on the political front. Debated ahead of the 7th party congress, the possibility of moving to a multi-party system has been decided against. For the moment, it is not even considered a suitable topic for public discussion in the press.

So can Vietnam pull off the delicate transition from a centrally-planned to a market economy, while avoiding the kind of turmoil which has ensued elsewhere? On the one hand, the economic changes are delivering power into the hands of the people and hastening social liberalisation in the press and elsewhere. There are even some well-off Vietnamese who can afford to send their children abroad to study and as the country opens up to tourism and foreign businessmen, Western influences and ideas are spreading. However, the desire for stability is shared by many who are scathing about the party and the years of Communist mismanagement of the economy. And Vietnam is still a country where about 80% of the population are peasants living on the land; for them political enfranchisement counts for little beside their material well-being.

The key determinant will be the success of economic reform and whether Vietnam can satisfy the aspirations of a population growing by 2.4% a year. In agriculture which accounts for about two-fifths of the economy, renovation has been an undoubted success. The lot of the peasants has improved greatly since collectivisation was abandoned and they have been allowed to farm their own land and keep the profits of their labour. Agricultural reform has also transformed Vietnam's ability to feed its population turning it from a big rice importer into a significant exporter.

Elsewhere much has been achieved and the progress in some areas of the economy is striking. But the problems ahead are immense. Reform itself is painful. Cuts in subsidies to state industries have pushed up unemployment and exposed the weakness of much of the industrial base. About one-third of state companies are probably beyond saving and a further third are in a perilous state.

Efforts are being made to modernise the banking system and attract foreign banks. But the local banking system is all but bankrupt because most of the banks' assets consist of loans to ailing state companies.

The physical and legal infrastructure of the economy is also badly underdeveloped and the inflationary psychology remains a deterrent to savings and investment. Although inflation was brought down from a peak of about 800% in 1988 to about 40% through a stiff monetary squeeze, there are signs it has crept up again. It is probably now running at least 60 to 80%.

Tackling these problems is made all the more difficult by the hostile external environment. The break-up of the Soviet Union has removed the main source of external aid and subsidy. And while Vietnam is rapidly re-orientating its trade, exports this year are falling below target because of the collapse of eastern Europe.

In addition, Vietnam is still subject to a vindictive and senseless US trade embargo which inhibits much foreign trade and investment and cuts it off from finance from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

However, foreign companies are moving into Vietnam. About $2 billion foreign investment has been committed so far, much of it in the oil industry and tourism. Increasingly, overseas Vietnamese – an important source of foreign currency – are returning to do business. And the peace settlement in Cambodia is certain to encourage those countries which have adhered in some form to the US trade embargo to break ranks and foster relations with Vietnam.

For Vietnam is a country with considerable attractions for foreign investors. It is rich in natural resources, the literacy rate of about 85% is high and nobody can doubt the determination of its people.

It may take 10 or 15 years, perhaps even longer. But in time Vietnam is likely to emerge as another of the dynamic economies in the South East Asian region. As Doanh points out, the whole process which has taken 200 years in Western economies cannot be achieved overnight in Vietnam. But, he adds: 'In five years we will create the fundamental pillars of a market economy'.

As to the future political complexion of Vietnam, it will depend in part on the response of the West. Ironically, the attitude of the US has probably contributed to pushing Vietnam towards rapprochement with its old enemy China. However the Vietnamese have no desire to become a client state of China. They would dearly like to normalise relations with the US and extend ties with the outside world. As that happens, and the market economy takes root, political change is likely to accelerate.●

*Peter Wilson-Smith is a reporter with BBC tv's The Money Programme.*

**'The spectre which haunts Vietnam's leaders and explains their need to reconcile the market economy with state ideology is what has happened in eastern Europe'**



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# State Of The Arts

**Lord Palumbo**, chair of the Arts Council, is dogged by controversy. *Alice Rawsthorn* challenged him about his rosy vision of the arts in Britain

If Central Casting were asked to find an actor for the role of an aesthetic entrepreneur, whose every initiative attracted a cloud of controversy, he probably wouldn't look like Peter Palumbo.

Palumbo is an improbable cause of controversy. The chairman of the Arts Council, founder of the Arts Foundation and *bête noire* of the architectural establishment is a mild-mannered, impeccably polite man, who couches most of his comments in the conditional and has a very, very neat row of pens on his desk.

Yet whatever he does, and whatever he says, controversy is never far away. It started with the storm over his plans to build a Mies van der Rohe tower, the 'monstrous stump' as Prince Charles called it, in the City of London and rumbled on when he unveiled an alternative design by Sir James Stirling, a '1930s wireless set' according to the stump's princely opponent.

There was the row over the Henry Moore sculpture he commissioned for St Stephen's Walbrook, a church in the City. Another row led to his abrupt departure as chair of the Tate Gallery trustees. Even his plan to build a Quinlan Terry folly in the grounds of his Berkshire home fell foul of a protest from his neighbours.

One reason why Palumbo stirs up so much controversy may be because he defies easy definition. He is a property developer, thanks to having inherited his father's firm. But, the wireless set aside, he hasn't developed. He *is* an aesthete – even his critics accept he has a genuine love of the arts – who is seen as a champion of the avant garde. But his taste – Mies, Moore and Stirling – is nothing if not conservative.

There is, after all, something *very* bizarre to the British, or to the British tabloids at least, in the spectacle of a very wealthy man splurging his money on art, rather than on sex, smack, or sports cars.

But the real rumpus started two years ago when Palumbo was appointed head of the Arts Council. He wasn't the first choice and even his supporters found it difficult to explain why the property developer who didn't develop had got the job.

No one, but no one could accuse him of not trying. As soon as he arrived he announced he would be a full-time chairman and has put in nine-hour days ever since. He dipped into his own pocket to do up the Council's old Piccadilly headquarters. And he is said to slip the odd personal cheque to needy arts bodies that the Council can't afford to help.

But the rows are still rumbling on. Luke Rittner resigned as director general shortly after his arrival. Palumbo's plan to raise £20m through his new Arts Foundation to support experimental art has been condemned as being in direct competition with the Arts Council itself.

His detractors still see him as a Tory toadie, whose appointment is indicative only of the government's disinterest in the arts. His defenders prefer to paint him as a victim of his own good nature, whose mistakes are due to naivete, not to misjudgement.

**What is the role of the Arts Council?**

There are various roles. One is to speak for the arts. We are here to serve the arts not to be served by them. Also to play a strategic role, which is a role the Arts Council hasn't really played before, to develop the artistic climate in this country so we have a blueprint for the future: not just for one, two or three years, but a much longer timespan.

**Is there a possible contradiction between those roles? You said you were there to serve the arts, not to be served by them. What is the distinction?**

We are there to represent the arts. We are not there for artists to come begging to us. We are there to further the interests of artists and the arts community.

**Do you feel that the Arts Council's role has changed over the years? How do your vision and your way of dealing with things differ from those of Maynard Keynes, the first chairman?**

I don't think they differ at all. If you look at the way that Keynes approached the arts and the way he set up the Arts Council, his words are as true today as they were 45 years ago. What has changed is the enormous demand for the arts and their enormous proliferation.

**Surely the political spirit of his day was very different. The Arts Council was founded in 1945, at a time when the state was seen as having a role to play in the development of arts and culture. That view has been questioned over the years. How much more difficult does that make your job today?**

Well, I don't know that anyone has questioned that view. I don't know that any government has refused to subsidise the arts. In fact, since I've been here, the arts have done rather well. I'm not saying that's due to me in any sense. But in the last 10 years the arts have had an uplift in funding of 30 to 35% in real terms, which is fairly good by most standards.

**But the proportion of public expenditure devoted to the arts in the UK is far lower than in other countries, France, for instance.**

The fact is that in France the arts are fourth on the political agenda. They are much lower down the agenda here and I'm trying to change that. I think the French go a little too far, because you can throw any money you like at the arts, but if you haven't got the talent, it's not much good. We've got the talent but not quite enough money. They have the money but not quite enough talent.

**What do you see as the role of the government in the arts?**

Any government in a civilised society has a duty – certainly on moral grounds – to support the arts. What has changed is the notion that, supplementary to that, there should be private sector funding, corporate sponsorship, individual support and so on. I think that's something to be welcolmed. We live in a plural society so it's only natural we should have plural funding.

**Isn't there a danger that government could use those alternative sources of funding to reduce its own input into the arts?**

Well, they haven't shown any sign of doing that and if they did I suspect that private sector funding would dry up. The one thing that the private sector has been adamant about – rightly in my opinion – is that it is happy to be a supplement to government funding but is not prepared to be a substitute for it. Royal Insurance, which funds the RSC, has made it clear that this



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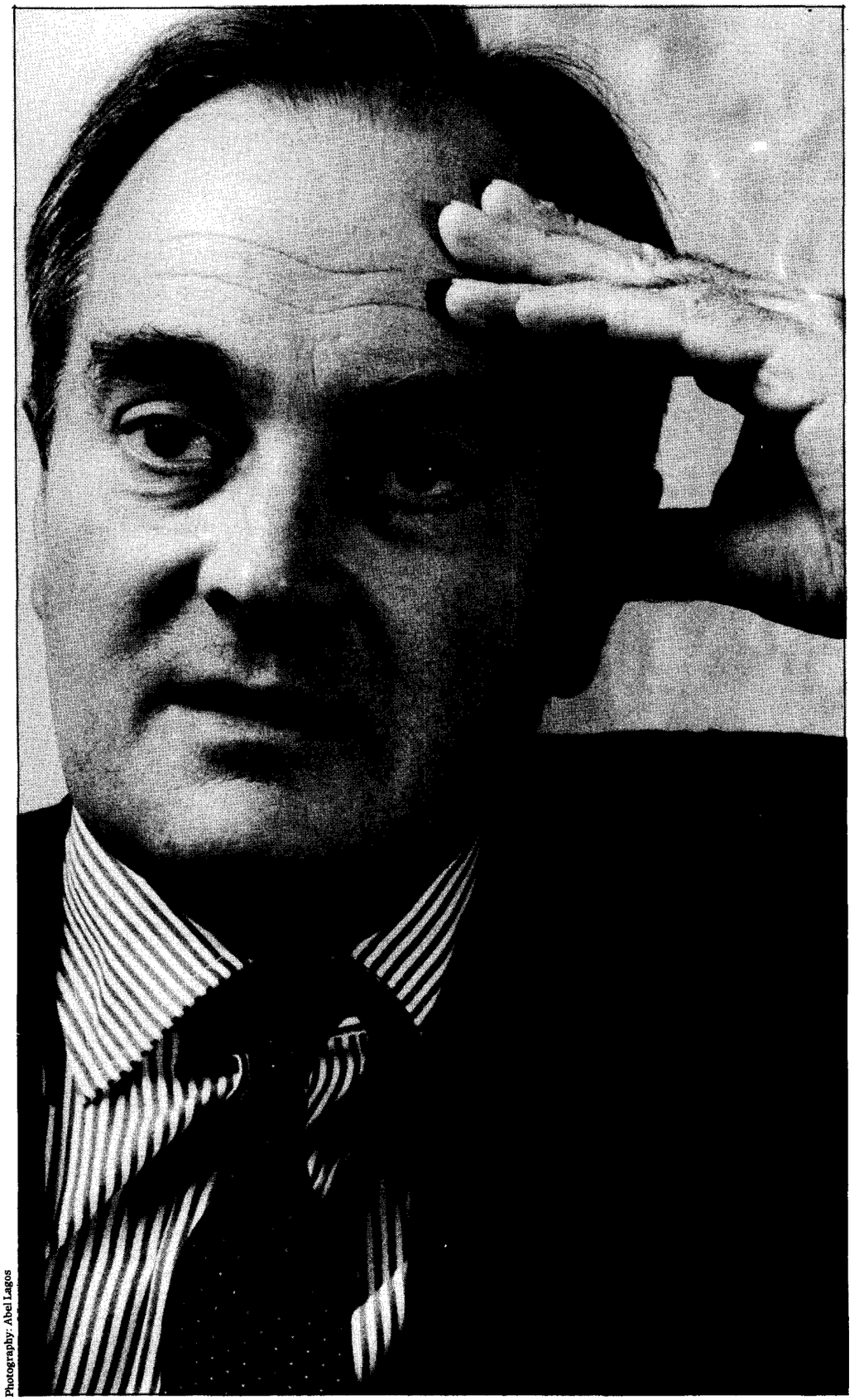

Photography: Abel Lagos

would be its position if the government tried to reduce its subsidy.

**The common criticism levelled at private sector funding is, of course, that it makes the arts more vulnerable to intervention by sponsers. There is the story of a sponser refusing to support the Theatre Royal Stratford because it had put on two plays criticising the Thatcher government over a 10-year period. Is there any credence to this argument?**

Not really. You do get isolated examples like that, but if you take the whole spectrum of private sector giving they happen very rarely. A good example is Mobil and the Manchester Royal Exchange where the artistic management has carte blanche. Mobil may not always be happy with the artistic policy but it isn't going to interfere.

**But isn't there a danger that arts organisations will realise that to attract private sponsorship they should perhaps tailor their output to make themselves palatable to sponsers?**

Well, what I've seen in my time here is an extraordinary change in sponsorship. At first it was very difficult to find sponsors for experimental or innovative art, but all that has changed. It started with the Prudential which is providing £600,000 over three years for experimental arts awards. Now BT, Barclays Bank and IBM, all big players in the game, are backing experimental art. Why are they doing it? I don't know, but it is a very welcome sign of the times.

**You're painting a very rosy picture of the government increasing its arts funding and empathetic sponsers becoming more amenable to experimental art, yet many arts organisations are in financial crisis. They are crying out for money. Museums are in desperate need of repair. Why is that?**

I agree that the cultural and artistic fabric of the country is in serious need of repair. That is a big issue which needs to be addressed sooner or later. As for the rest, I don't think we need a huge injection of funds. A relatively small amount of money goes a long way in the arts in



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# Pay And Display

*Tim Dawson* talks to **Elizabeth Esteve-Coll**, director of the V&A, about the commercialisation of museums

this country. We are getting there, though it's not going to happen overnight.

**Are you satisfied with the level of support that the present government is giving the arts?**

Of course in an ideal world I would like a little more. But the government's record is not at all bad. I'm not saying it has addressed all the problems, but we have wonderful institutions that are the envy of most people in the world and there is an enormous building programme going on. This seems to me to give the lie to the argument that the arts are in difficulties or in crisis. If you look at the whole picture I think you'll see that the arts are flourishing. It's my job to see that they flourish even more.

**Surely if you do look at the whole picture you also see the buckets of water collecting the rain that comes through the roof of the Tate Gallery, and the director of the English National Opera begging for money from the audience before performances. This is not symbolic of a flourishing industry.**

Buckets in the Tate Gallery, that's disgraceful. You see it in the National Theatre too. That shouldn't happen. But we're back to the question of fabric and it has to be treated separately in my view. It is a very big project and it needs an act of political will to resolve it.

**You recently floated plans for a Millenium Fund to raise £1 billion to restore the fabric of museums and cathedrals. How is that progressing?**

I don't think we'll see very much movement until after the general election. I hope that whichever party is returned to power will take a long, hard look at the arts and decide on an order of priorities.

**What is your view of the Labour Party's arts policy – its proposal to devolve more power to local authorities?**

Labour's plans for the arts seem to be very impressive. If they can deliver on the promises they have made in opposition then the future looks very rosy to me. I think it's a rosy picture for the arts whichever party wins the next general election.●

**Has the V&A become the Laura Ashley of the 1990s as your predecessor predicted?**

That was a much misquoted and misunderstood statement. What Sir Roy Strong meant by that, was that the museum is, and continues to be, a major source of design inspiration. And indeed there is no reason why the museum itself should not exploit its own design potential and use it for commercial purposes to generate income in order to develop activities within the museum.

**But has the rise of recreational shopping affected museums? Shops offer very immediate, easy-to-take-in displays. Are museums moving towards providing a similar experience?**

I hope not. In this museum there is something for everybody. There's something for the connoisseur, or for the researcher, but there's also something for those who are seeking to develop experience, to educate themselves by introducing themselves to new subjects, to new objects, to new periods, to new cultures. I think it's a totally emotional experience. How long people come into a museum, how long they stay and how they relate, varies enormously according to the cultural condition of the individual. We've got to make the place welcoming, so that no matter what their cultural conditioning is, people can come to immediate grips with whatever part of the collection attracts them.

**What changed to initiate the debate about an easier-access museum in the mid 1980s?**

There is a real response in many museums to what is in the air – a desire to know, to learn as a family group. It is particularly something which the independent museums and the museums of industrial archaeology have developed. It's an exploration of history through your own roots, through the immediately accessible – 'Granny had one of those'. The immediate accessibility of industrial archaeology has had an impact in creating a new audience.

**And there is surely the need to generate more revenue in the face of diminishing monies from central government.**

There is absolutely no doubt whatsoever that museums have got a major requirement and have been pressed by government to be more cost-effective and generate as much revenue as possible. But there is also the moral argument. Museums are now in the active phase of dissemination of information through their publications and through their displays. And that is all part of a wider trend towards involving museums in the life-long process of education. This museum is getting involved in community education and in providing a schools service. There is a desire for the museums to get closer to the public and to a wider cross-section of the public. There are many reasons for that, one of which clearly has to be the need to generate income – but it's more complex than that.

**'The ace caff with a nice museum' line was obviously a piece of copywriting. But I am intrigued that the V&A's shops are much busier than any exhibition area, and that seems to be the case in most galleries and museums. Why is that? What does that mean?**

The museum-going public want to look at things and want to admire things, but also want to acquire things. Having admired things which are beautiful, this somehow triggers off the psychology of the individual into desiring to purchase. Quite what lies behind the association of historic artefacts, or the historic context, and the desire to acquire, probably needs some research done on it. Look at the way you go to a National Trust house. People want some kind of souvenir, some kind of token which reminds them of the visit. Maybe it's that – the souvenir token – which has been articulated commercially, to encourage people to equate the two experiences.

**Does the rise of 'heritage' – something shallow and uncritical – which seems to be a growing phenomenon in museums, worry you?**

I get very alarmed by things which aren't real, things which are reproduced, are created. Scenes, artefacts which are juxtaposed in order to be attractive, and which aren't in any way genuine. I think that there is nothing more important than people coming to grips with real objects in a real context. I do believe that it is perfectly possible. A wholly simulated experience worries me a great deal in the heritage context.

**I'm struck by the number of new exhibitions which are now sponsored. Does that make a difference to what you exhibit or how you exhibit it?**

We are particularly careful in this museum, and I think in most British museums, to make certain that the intellectual content and artistic integrity of the exhibition is not influenced by the sponsor. I think you have to be ruthless about that, even although you may lose the sponsorship.

**Has that happened?**

One example, which is a social taboo, is The Art Of Death, where we have not found a sponsor, but we think it's an important exhibition and so we are putting it on with museum resources.

**Is the museum still in deep financial difficulties?**

The museum clearly has not got sufficient funding from government to deal with the backlog on its building works. It doesn't have enough money to purchase objects – the purchase grant for objects has been frozen since 1984-85. And you try buying heritage objects which go for £7.6m when actually your spending capacity is slightly under a million.

**And the building itself needs extensive renovation...**

That's right. Probably over £100m over the next ten years. That is not because of this government nor can one lay the blame at any particular government's door. Successive governments have



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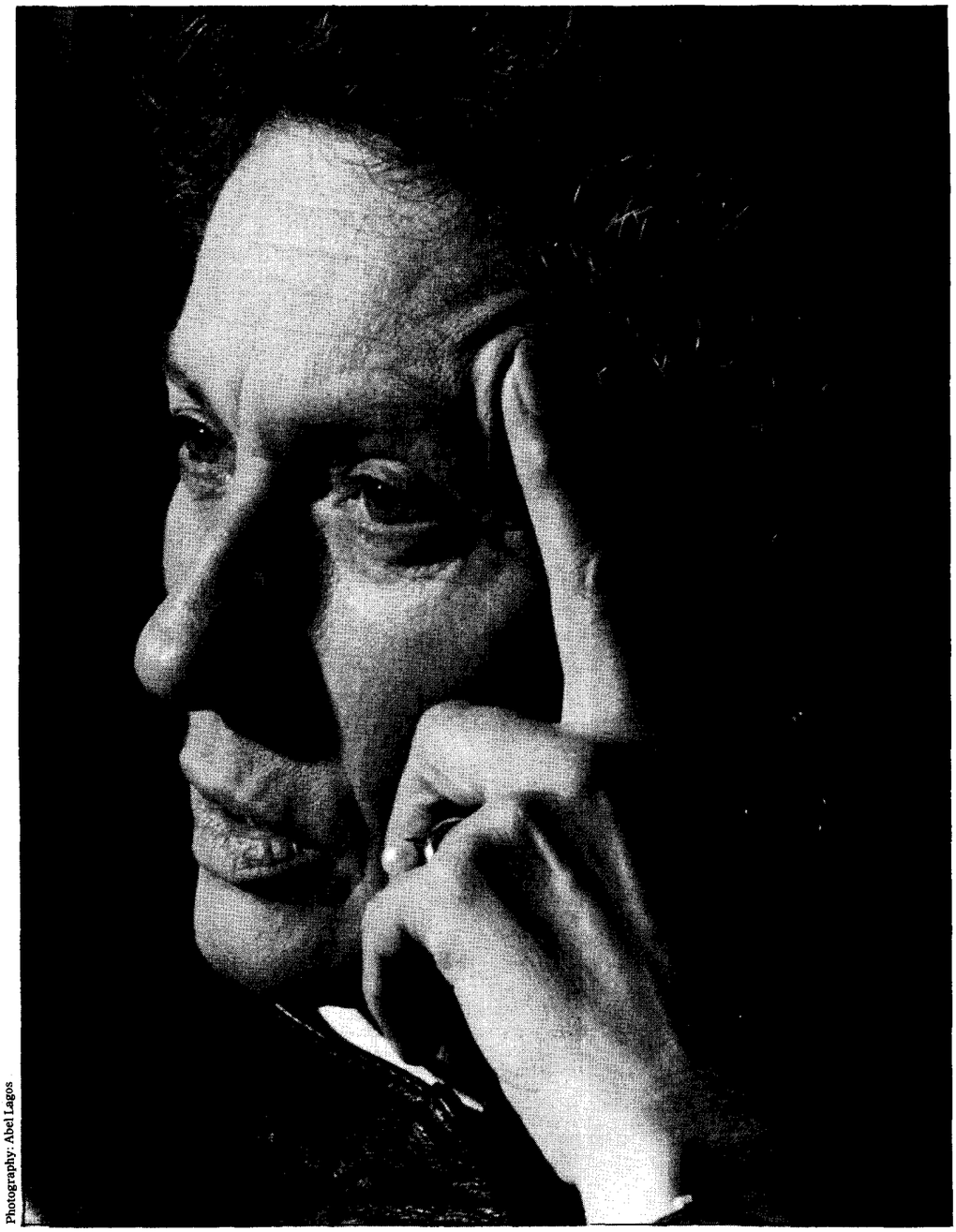

Photography: Abel Lagos

ignored the needs and the fabric of the buildings to such an extent that they have deteriorated dramatically. 50% of our roofs still need to be replaced.

**Is that going to happen?**

Well, I have great faith in a public lottery!

**Which has been vetoed, at least in the immediate future.**

Yes, I still have hopes that this may be reconsidered. However much one may talk about generating revenue, a museum will never be, by its very nature, a profit-generating organisation. It will never be profit-centred. It can be cost-effective, it can generate some income, it can be more efficient, but a museum, or a gallery, must be funded nationally and have considerable government resources devoted to it.

**Do you have a strategy for persuading the government of that?**

Will a constant wearing away at a stone work?

**Why do you think things are so different in Europe? The French spend a great deal more than we do on their galleries.**

The French are a highly self-conscious, intellectual nation. Look at the recent French prime ministers, all of whom have written fairly serious and authoritative works of scholarship. They have a different kind of politician. And in France the government has long recognised the social, economic and indeed political parts of culture, which we have taken for granted. Look what Mitterrand, Giscard and Pompidou spent on culture. The result is that Paris is one of the most exciting cultural capitals in Europe, and that has now spread to the regions, which is very exciting – but deeply depressing if you're English!

**That sounds a little bit like saying that we are a more philistine culture, in which funding for the arts has been run down. The only response that British galleries and museums have found is a slightly cheap, scraping round for more money.**

There has been a failure of imagination at the government level about the vast importance of our cultural heritage – the picture galleries, the British Museum, our industrial archaeology – which people will travel to see. Take South Kensington: the Natural History Museum, the Geology Museum, the Science Museum, the Royal Albert Hall, the Goethe Institute, the V&A – all of that in one tiny area. Its a unique cultural complex. Why on earth aren't we marketing it in Europe? You can bet the French would.

**Do you have a vision for the future of the V&A?**

I want the museum to be in the national bloodstream. I want to make a visit to the V&A part of what you would do at the weekend, or half-term or the holidays: 'Let's go and see what's new at the V&A', or 'Let's go and revisit a favourite object'. The museum was once in the national bloodstream, and for all kinds of complex reasons people have tended to forget the incredible richness of our collection.

It's interesting now with the *Visions Of Japan* exhibition that you hear people commenting, 'Oh, I thought the V&A was full of Victorian furniture', 'Look at that – they collect dress, and contemporary dress too'. I would like us to be so deep in the subconscious that people think automatically of bringing their children, bringing their families, bringing visitors to the museum.●



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# Saint Derek

Martyr of the cine-margin – **Graham McCann** finds Derek Jarman winning back his critics' hearts

Liam Longman

The British warm to rebels when rebels go cold: death makes the non-conformist much easier to cope with, romanticise, even canonise. Derek Jarman, since he was diagnosed as being HIV positive, is, with painful irony, now being depicted as Saint Derek by a critical community which once did its best to ignore him.

Things change: Jarman, however, remains the same. While the obituarists grow increasingly impatient, Derek Jarman continues to write, direct, design, and agitate. This month sees the release of his latest film, *Edward II*, a characteristically controversial revision of Christopher Marlowe's 16th-century play. It is already being hailed, mawkishly, as Jarman's 'death work'. One hopes it is not; it is too promising, too alive, for that.

*Edward II* is another in a very long line of personal heroes Jarman has taken from history and refashioned for modern times. *Sebastiane* (1976) depicted the Roman soldier as the masochistic martyr of homosexual projections; *Jubilee* (1978) transposed Elisabeth I to 1970s punk London; *The Tempest* (1978) celebrated Prospero as the ultimate Shakespearean figure of the author; and *Caravaggio* (1986) featured the gay painter, the original rough-trade lumpen artist. Christopher Marlowe was homosexual, and died in a pub brawl while still in his 20s. Jarman takes up his play and spirit. 'Marlowe outs the past', he writes, 'why don't we out the present?'.

Jarman has always assiduously cultivated the image of himself as an outsider. He is deliberately marginal, creating a space between himself and his contemporaries through a succession of wilfully provocative exaggerations. David Puttnam, Hugh Hudson, Alan Parker and Ridley Scott have been summarily dismissed by Jarman as 'a group of advertising men'. The idea of a British film industry is ridiculed: 'I was never an industrialist, and I wasn't brought up to be like one'. Traditional strategies for political change are treated with contempt: 'It isn't possible to believe in democratic government any longer... It's all rigged'.

Such remarks are either the chatter of a political simpleton or the considered barbs of an arch hyperbolist; Jarman likes to keep one guessing. His films have certainly divided their audiences over the years. Norman Stone, the self-appointed arbiter of Great British films, was exasperated by Jarman's *Last Of England*: 'No identifiable story ... I do not really know what the film is about'. The American critic Vincent Canby likened Jarman's work to 'a fingernail scratching along a blackboard'.

Jarman has never sought a 'mainstream' audience. He says he makes his films for art-house cinemas; he regards popular 'commercial' cinema as both artistically and politically bankrupt. His own work is intensely personal, technically experimental, and strikingly original in the context of British cinematic traditions. His films concentrate on image, symbolism, colour and sound. He is not a story-teller, he is a picture painter. The films are full of quotations – from plays, paintings, songs, and, most notably, from Jarman's own life. His homosexuality has always been an integral element in his approach to film-making; the earlier celebrations of promiscuity were replaced, in the light of the threat of AIDS, by bitter reflections on Clause 28 and sexual violence.

*Edward II* is the latest, and one of the richest, of Jarman's inventions. In stark contrast to Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V*, a nostalgic reverie that mirrored the deluded grandeur of Thatcher's Britain, Jarman's *Edward II* is an uncompromising critique of contemporary concerns. His two most enduring passions – his homosexuality and his Englishness – are explored in a very distinctive historical space. Edward's obsessive love for the commoner Gaveston is exploited here as a modern gay love affair set in contemporary England.

Edward's wife, Isabella, colludes sexually and politically with Mortimer, an influential nobleman, whose opposition to Edward and Gaveston eventually leads to civil war. Connections between power and sex are at the centre of the film: Mortimer imagines that the state itself is being corrupted by Edward's relationship with Gaveston. This relationship, argues Jarman, 'is mirrored by what is happening right now with Section 28 and Clause 25 and so on'. One awaits the terrible conclusion, when the king is killed, huimiliatingly, with the red hot poker. In fact, Jarman ends the film with his own, utopian, denouement: the executioner throws away his weapon, and kisses the king. We hear the lines, 'And what are kings when regiment is gone/But perfect shadows on a sunshine day'.

The film is typically idiosyncratic in style: much of the play's original dialogue is retained, but modern costumes are used (Ivana Trump-style dresses and Gay Rights t-shirts), Annie Lennox sings a song and the young Prince owns a Sony Walkman. This is a shocking and challenging work, but it is also a flawed and uneven one. There is a disturbing element of misogynism in the film, particularly when Isabella tries, unsuccessfully, to arouse the passions of her husband; replacing the conventional silly, shallow image of the gay man with an equally insensitive image of the heterosexual woman is nothing to applaud. This reflects Jarman's priorities: he is political only for very personal reasons. His use of working-class figures is calculated and rather patronising. Explaining why he makes Gaveston working-class, Jarman said, 'there is an element where he might become a vicious, Kray-like gangster... ' (unlike someone middle-class?)

Jarman, if he is a radical, is an eminently midde-class one. His notorious remarks – 'I hate people who win' – come with all the glib self-assurance of someone who has never experienced the much more confusing pain of unavoidable poverty. To be *fair*, Jarman has always insisted he is a traditionalist, and he is not unaware of the contradictory nature of many of his comments. What seems clear is that the very quality most admired in his work – its originality, overturning the expectations of the audience – is the most likely reason so few people have felt able to enjoy it. *Edward II* does not really resolve this conradiction, but, in its own extraordinary, maddening, ingenious way, it deserves an unusually large and very attentive audience.●



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# Looking Local

**Kevin Robins** and **James Cornford** ask how Channel Five will fit into the new media map.

The national sphere has always seemed the natural context for broadcasting. Indeed, over the past 60 years or so, it has been broadcasting which has largely given substance to that imagined community called the British nation. While regional and local services have been developed, they have always had a precarious existence within the national public service system.

If the nation state is still the dominant framework for broadcasting in the 1990s, however, then it is no longer unproblematically so. Competitive pressures are being exerted from above and below. From above, we are seeing the emergence of global image markets driven by such giants as Sony, Time Warner and News Corporation, and also the first moves towards the creation of what the European Commission calls a 'European audiovisual space'. And, from below, there are new developments towards establishing broadcasting spaces at the level of small nations, regions and even cities.

The scope of the broadcasting debate is being pushed beyond an exclusively national focus. A key policy agenda now concerns the relationships between different audiovisual spaces. How do global services like CNN and MTV fit together with national broadcasting networks like the BBC and Channel Four? How do the regionally based Channel Three companies relate to potential local and community services? What is the possible role for European channels that could be delivered by satellite and cable?

This is the context in which Channel Five is being painfully legislated into existence. Channel Five will be the last terrestrial television channel to be established in Britain, and, because current and future satellite channels are likely to be licensed as 'non-domestic services', it is almost certainly the last channel wholly within the British regulatory sphere. Consequently, it seems to offer the last and best hope of introducing something really new into British broadcasting. Can this new channel, like Channel Four before it, extend and enhance the ideals of public service provision? This is the question being asked of it.

Two affirmative proposals have emerged in response to this question. Each has brought a geographical perspective to the broadcasting agenda: each, in its different way, has seen the development of cities and regions as the new focus for public service objectives. The most pragmatic approach has come from what is effectively an anti-metropolitan lobby, arguing that Channel Five can be (almost) anything it chooses to be, provided it is based outside London. Most of the activity from this lobby has been driven by local authorities and development agencies, and by the various media development agencies that emerged in the mid-1980s in Britain's major provincial cities. Those in Sheffield, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Liverpool have been most vocal.

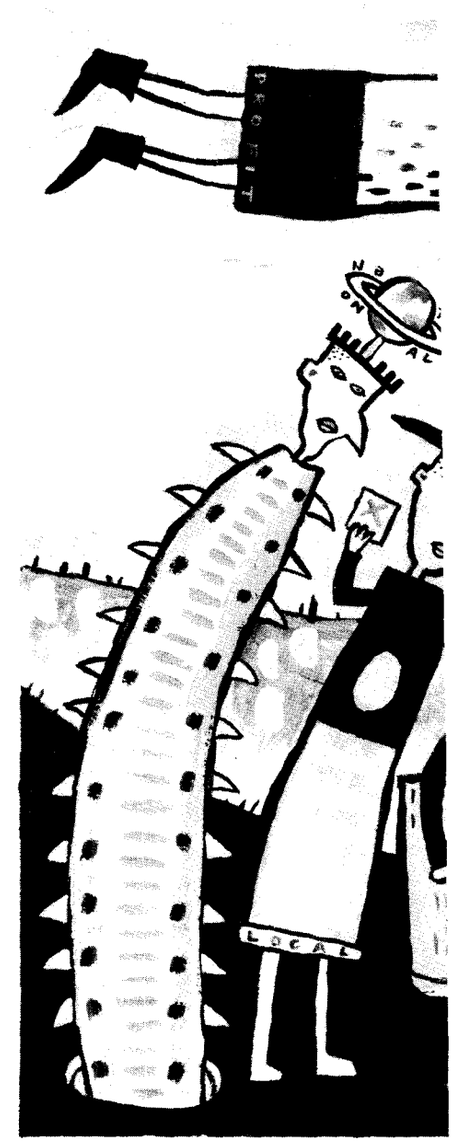
The basic rationale is economic. Television is seen as a significant and expanding industry, and Channel Five is fitted into the rationale of local economic development as a major inward investment opportunity. The channel is expected to provide benefits in terms of bringing jobs and skills to the chosen location. There is also the anticipation that Channel Five will stimulate local programme producers and generate the critical mass of activity necessary to sustain a regional media industry.

There are also cultural objectives. Channel Five is seen as a chance to develop one or more regional centres producing programmes for national and international markets. Such centres, it is argued, can act as a counterweight to the concentration of television production, and therefore of cultural and political influence, in and around London. Though it cannot legislate on the location of the new channel, the Independent Television Commission itself has recognised that there would be 'some advantage' if its headquarters were in a major regional city since this would 'encourage a distinctive non-metropolitan identity for Channel Five, as well as local sources of programme supply'.

In areas such as Tyneside and Glasgow, which already have a small television industry, the new channel is seen as an opportunity to expand the industrial base. For places which have no ITV company or major BBC studios, such as Sheffield and Edinburgh, it is largely seen as a way of getting onto the media map. What is common to all these places, however, is a determination to overcome what they see as the deep historical imbalance which has concentrated resources, decision-making and employment in London. For the more ambitious cities, the aim is to position themselves as major players, not only in the British, but also in the European, media landscape.

The alternative, and far more idealistic, model has been the proposal to use the new channel as a vehicle for introducing a local television service. At the Royal Television Society convention in September 1989, Chris Rowley (then head of television planning at the IBA) outlined the possibility of a part-local, part-national service with 30 to 35 local stations 'opting-out' of the national service for a few hours a day in order to broadcast local programmes. His calculation was that a local service could be sustained in towns and cities with a minimum of 300,000 population per station. Rowley called this model for the new channel 'city-state television'.

This local-national model for Channel Five has rapidly gained an impressive degree of support. Those who want to maintain some degree of continuity with the tradition of public service broadcasting have seized upon Rowley's proposal as the best way to prevent the channel from becoming a predatory commercial enterprise. Regionalism and localism are clearly seen as holding out the best prospects for averting this outcome.




It is these advocates of a local option who have been most successful in shaping the policy debate over the new channel. There is an almost instinctive sense that 'local' must be a good thing. And, of course, the 'city-state' label evokes images of local democracy and civic identity. Indeed, so appealing is the idea that the debate has increasingly cen-



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Illustration: Spike Gerrell

tred on whether the city-state model is economically viable, whether there is sufficient potential in local advertising revenue to sustain the 'opt-out' stations. What hasn't been addressed, however, is why such a model is desirable.

A number of questions should be asked of the advocates of local services. First, is terrestrial broadcast television really an appropriate technology for the delivery of such services? In the longer term, the 134 cable franchises which cover almost all Britain's major urban areas offer scope for local services. Alternatively, radio could provide more choice in local media, with several stations in each area. Yet another possibility may be to increase the regional and sub-regional opt-out component of Channel Three, as some bidders have already planned. The point is that Channel Five should be thought about in the broader context of alternative media services and technologies.

A more difficult question concerns what 'local' means now. 'Small is beautiful' has become a platitude of our times. Lurking somewhere behind discussions of local media is always the myth of some authentic community, in need of reinforcement or resurrection. The idea of local television always seems to conjure up the vision of an electronic 'village green'. The recent and much publicised experiment with local television in the Lancashire village of Waddington has clearly become an imaginative focus for this localist ideal. This rural image hardly chimes, however, with the proposals for 'local' stations which range in population from 300,000 to 7m. In a predominantly urban society, what is local is an increasingly complex matter.

What should be borne in mind, too, is that many constituencies of interest, diasporic communities, are geographically dispersed or concentrated in a number of different locations. We should be aware that communities of interest are not necessarily, or even ideally, coterminous with local interests.

Most important of all, what do we expect from local media? What do we think local services can achieve? It is significant that we are discussing city-state television at a time when our major cities are visibly fragmenting (this is being written in Newcastle!). Are we expecting the media to take on a significant role in reawakening local political and cultural life? While they might conceivably have a role to play in such a process, it would need a much broader package of reforms to reverse the processes of local fragmentation and division that are now undermining the stability of urban public life. In the absence of a meaningful decentralisation of power in our society, local media could simply become a distraction, creating the illusion of community rather than playing a part in its renewal. The danger is that they simply become a symbolic gesture to some long-lost ideal of community. The recent spate of civil disorder should make us question simple and optimistic evocations of community.

If the city-state model has put the question of local television onto the policy agenda, there has been no substance or force to its localist aspirations. Nor has there been any convincing arguments as to why this is the best model for Channel Five. Whatever the optimistic forecasts of its protagonists, there must surely be questions about the organisational coherence of the city-state model, and also doubts about its longer-term viability. And if a local Channel Five were to fail, either completely or in the expectation of providing 'relief' to the advertising market, this could have serious 'knock-on' consequences for public service provision as a whole (for example, a return to demands for advertising on the BBC). Hitherto, the various television channels have been insulated from each other by regulation. In the new and more competitive environment, channels will be more interdependent, and it is vital that new services do not destabilise existing ones.

For these reasons, the more pragmatic alternative of a non-metropolitan channel seems a more secure option. The partial break-up of what has been predominantly a national broadcasting framework does, indeed, offer the potential for new kinds of diversity and pluralism. But this potential is nothing if not precarious. We are currently seeing the process of centralisation within the BBC provoked by cost-cutting strategies; there is to be a centralisation of the Channel Three scheduling and commissioning system in the post-1992 franchise period; and Channel Four, the broadcaster most identified with the stimulation of a regional independent production sector, is presently experiencing a 'crisis of identity'.

A new period of diversity and pluralism is by no means guaranteed. A priority, then, must be to ensure that a regional broadcasting presence is achieved on a sound financial basis. A non-metropolitan, rather than a local, Channel Five seems to be the most viable step, at the present moment, towards the longer-term goal of diversity and pluralism in broadcasting provision.●



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# Psychophobias

**David Cohen** is struggling to keep mental illness on the popular agenda

A dishevelled man wanders round Princes Street in Edinburgh. He stops people and demands to know if they have a certificate to show they are sane.

In 1988, in Moscow, I met a man who could produce such a certificate. He was in his late 80s and frail. He felt persecuted. His neighbours insisted his insane habits disturbed them and threatened to report him to the police. Under great stress he went to the Moscow dispensaire for his area and persuaded them to give him a certificate of sanity.

Even in the USSR this man needed less protection from the KGB than from his neighbours. I'm not denying the existence of official Soviet psychiatric abuse but pointing to a sad truth. Mental illness carries a stigma all over the world. It affects the way patients are treated both in and out of hospital. It affects funding for mental health services. It affects the human rights of individual psychiatric patients and their families.

It is not surprising that governments have not paid that much attention to mental illness as opposed, say, to cancer. Stigma runs deep and surfaces in many ways. Despite much advocacy for patients by groups such as MIND in Britain and others in Western Europe, public attitudes here are characterised by fear, especially fear that patients are violent. The press sometimes whip up sensational fears if, for example, an ex-patient is found guilty of a violent crime.

Follow-up studies suggest that such fears are misplaced. Mental patients are in fact less likely to be violent than average, but most societies persist in believing the opposite. Here the headlines still scream about nutters and mad axemen. In America Davis Pollack, chairman of the National Alliance For The Mentally Ill, complained to me that tv, radio and the papers poked cheap fun at psychiatric patients in a way that they would never dare with cancer patients or the physically handicapped. In Japan, ex-psychiatric patients are not allowed to have a driving licence, to work as cooks or bakers, to enter a public bath or to act as tourist guides. In India the mentally ill are taken to religious shrines to be beaten, in spite of pamphlets from the National Institute for Mental Health in Bangalore, advising local communities it is not necessary to whip the demons out of those who exhibit psychiatric symptoms.

Mentally ill people suffer their rejection from society in an intensely personal way. In every single country I have studied, patients are often abandoned by families. Egypt and India pride themselves on close family ties yet I came across many stories of patients who were isolated, abandoned or simply locked up. A Greek study in 1968 found that even when someone came from a village which had strong community links, they tended to be abandoned once they entered hospital. A survey in Tokyo showed that only 30% of people thought it would not be a 'family disgrace' to have a mentally ill relative.

Money for research into mental illness is scarce and in health budgets psychiatry usually has a low priority. Some American psychiatrists complain about the resources devoted to AIDS. Despite the rhetoric that it's God's punishment for the permissive society, governments fund research heavily. Dr Subjud Mukerjhee, a psychiatrist working at the Creedmoor Hospital in New York, regretted that schizophrenics did not die, since if only they did there might be serious money for serious research. 'Yet schizophrenia is a living death often', he added.

If the situation is bad in the West where there is at least a tradition of services, it is even worse in the Third World. The World Health Organisation reported in 1985 that Afghanistan and Morocco have just two psychiatrists each; Jordan has a total of only 200 psychiatric beds; Libya, a huge country, boasts it now has two psychiatric hospitals; Pakistan says it cannot afford to provide drugs for all mental patients who need them. A recent study on the Phillipines, Taiwan and Thailand found these countries 'both unable and unwilling to allocate economic, educational, administrative, research and manpower resources' to secure acceptable standards of care.

As someone who has reported on mental health issues since the mid 1970s, what I find particularly depressing is the way the same allegations of mistreatment keep recurring. In the 1980s there were instances of brutality from the Serbsky in Moscow, to Japan, to Liverpool. I reported on a series of mental health scandals in Japan where hundreds of patients died. In Germany a scandal about brutality in hospitals in Berlin has just come out. Nobody is really sure what is happening in Soviet psychiatry now. Most dissidents have been released but many need help and rehabilitation. They have suffered through years spent unjustly in hospitals and there is little sign that Soviet psychiatry recognises the need.

In Britain, the Mental Health Act Commission now provides detained patients with an agency they can complain to and which will investigate their complaints. It's a major reform. But the Commission only deals with detained patients – a minority – and it has not been that effective in dealing with special hospitals. There is an inquiry now on about conditions at Ashworth Special Hospital throughout the 1980s.

Psychiatry has a long history in the world. There have always been psychiatric reformers with excellent intentions. It is over 200 years since Pinel took the chains off patients at the Saltpetrière Hospital in Paris. But no country has yet solved the problem of how to provide effective and humane care for its mentally ill. Few people now argue, as the anti-psychiatrists RD Laing and Thomas Szasz eloquently did in the 1960s, that madness is a myth. Szasz used as evidence the fantastic variety of symptoms of schizophrenia that could be found in the literature. How could you have an illness where the doctors did not agree either on the symptoms or on the treatment? The macabre truth, Laing and Szasz claimed, was that society labelled as schizophrenics those who troubled it. Rebels and dissidents were lunatics.

These arguments threatened conventional psychiatrists, who in 1969 set up an ambitious international study of 1200 patients. Two-thirds



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**Owen Kelly** duels in hyperreality

# Zap Zest

Illustration: Julia Powell

suffered from 'first rank' symptoms: they heard voices, had jumbled thoughts, blunted emotions, hallucinations and felt persecuted. In such cases psychiatrists could agree on the diagnosis, but with 'second rank' symptoms there was more conflict: diagnoses varied from doctor to doctor and from country to country. But slight dissent didn't bother the organisers of the project. They had succeeded in showing that most psychiatrists agreed on what schizophrenia was.

Laing and Szasz lost the argument but their ideas have affected mental health treatment all over the world – more than most psychiatrists like to admit. There are issues on the agenda now which were little mentioned 20 years ago, such as the legal rights of patients, their consent to treatment, the dangers of giving too many drugs and the rights of families to have as much information as possible. Even in Cairo and Calcutta, Laing and Szasz have had some influence, though far from enough.

One of the continuing ironies is that one generation's solutions tend to become the next generation's problems. Drugs were once seen as the answer; then we discovered their long-term side-effects. Decanting patients from hospitals has been the most recent panacea; now we have discovered that so-called 'community care' leads all too often to community neglect. There are no simple solutions to what seems to be a permanent, human problem.

Ambivalence is not confined to politicians and the general public: doctors themselves do not value psychiatry highly. A study in 1972 showed that it was the first choice of only 1.4% of British doctors. The psychiatrist Anthony Clare, writing in 1976, asked why British doctors shun psychiatry as a career. He concluded that it was a mixture of poor career prospects (because GPs made more money) and snobbery. The psychologist Liam Hudson, researching the same question, found that medical graduates are attracted to specialties that are more technological in nature. Madness, 'the dark side of the moon', is best shunned.

In the United States psychiatry has apparently higher status and is chosen by many more medical graduates. But that is no bonus for the mentally ill, because the best US psychiatrists take neurotic cases. I don't mean to belittle such problems, but there is a major difference between the schizophrenic, and neurotics who fret about relationships, anxiety, and why they still can't get on with their mothers. That prince of patients, Woody Allen, may well have complexes, but like thousands of others in therapy he is not ill. (He said himself that the great merit of psychotherapy was that it let him talk for an hour a day about himself without any interruption.) For many patients their therapist is part of a personal mind and body maintenance team, which massages them, manicures them and perfumes their egos. It's hard to avoid thinking that this sort of psychotherapy is a bit of an indulgence. Fuller Torrey, a hard-headed psychiatrist, has argued that for good psychiatrists to devote themselves to such pseudo-patients, 'the worried well', is a misuse of expertise. It is as if the best surgeons spent all their time treating acne.●

**Children fantasise about transcending the boundaries of their reality; adults too. The fantasies each generation has, though, are culturally specific. I wanted to live in tv-land, rescuing the Lone Ranger and chasing after Yogi Bear. My children want to live in computer-land, rescuing the Mario Bros and chasing after PacMan.**

**Thanks to the convergence of electronic technology, and the continuing desires of the leisure industry to market new 'concepts', this is now almost possible. There are two separate routes to simulating life in computer-land. Firstly, you can make a computer game so complex, with control mechanisms so involving, that users are prepared to suspend disbelief, and imagine they are actually inside it. This is the virtual reality approach. Secondly, you can physically build an environment – an adult adventure playground – and then control its behaviour electronically.**

**Example of both approaches now exist in London. Since August, there has been a virtual reality game called CyberSpace at the Rock Garden restaurant in Covent Garden. However, I opted to enter the Zap Zone at Streatham Mega-Bowl. This is an example of the second kind of game – the kind that actually exists, but is controlled through a central computer system.**

**The game area is a simple maze built of metal, containing stairways, cul-de-sacs, and hiding places; it looks like the set for a chase scene in any one of a dozen low-budget science fiction films.**

**The game itself is played by two teams. Each team member is equipped with an all-in-one jacket and light gun. There are target areas on the jacket which are activated by an infrared beam from the opposition's light guns. Each player has 20 'shots' and four lives, shown on LED screen on the pistol. Each team has a base which the other team try to reach; and a re-energising area, where jackets and pistols are automatically recharged. Whenever a base is reached it triggers a siren for three seconds.**

**I played on a Sunday morning, with my six and eleven-year-olds. When we came out 15 minutes later, there were six teenage girls waiting to play.**

**Cyberspace and the Zap Zone have been developed from the cliches and expectations generated by home computer games. Defenders of such games argue that they improve physical co-ordination and reflexes, by demanding fast and accurate responses to rapidly changing situations onscreen; and that they teach problem-solving or strategic skills. Opponents argue that they isolate people and teach an amoral love of violence.**

**These arguments will inevitably be applied to such new entertainments. This was neatly demonstrated the next evening when I was admonished by a responsible adult for teaching my children to play war games. I was, and am, convinced that what we have here is a metaphor problem. How close to actual war does something have to be to be a war game? Chess is a metaphor for war, but nobody would complain if I bought my kids a chess board. Presumably here the metaphor is deemed to be too formalised to resemble the real thing.**

**As far as I am concerned, an important aspect is that war games simulate killing – when you are hit you are out of the game. But in Zap Zone, you illuminate other people's costumes as often as you are able. You can re-energise as often as you need. Everyone is in the game to the end.**

**This is more like a ball game played with light, or childhood games of tag. Players duck and dive, trying to shine their torches onto other players' costumes. The pace of the game is frenetic. Body contact of any kind is forbidden. The frame of mind generated, in my experience, is not one of blood lust.**

**The liberal mind, though, hears 'shooting' and thinks 'war game'; thinks frenzied amorality and tribal loyalties. The liberal mind is going to have more and more of these problems. Electronic entertainment generates and manipulates pseudo-realities. As such, it is going to clash with the guardians of decency and morality over the extent to which these 'realities' are metaphors, or to what extent they are discrete, morality-free zones.●**



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# BOOKS

**David Herd** on Hull's *bête noire*

## Humberside Up

**Bête Noire** is a contemporary poetry and arts project based in Hull. Appearing twice-yearly, its 400-page magazine aims to juxtapose artists of diverse 'class, race, religion, sexuality, and gender', while embracing the whole gamut of available genre.

In theory, such intentions can sound a little like the fashionable hymning of 'sheer heterogeneity, random difference'. In practice, the proximity of such disparate materials as James Kelman's hard-bitten Glaswegian prose and the high London camp of Jeremy Reed, the expansive difficulty of Peter Didsbury and the American Fred Voss's West Coast factory poetry, is authentically provocative. It is what Fredric Jameson calls 'genuine difference', that which is cut against some kind of cultural norm. Certainly its editor, John Osborne, would have it

that way.

Through *Bête Noire*, Osborne is trying to create a space that won't lock his project into certain types of publicity. This idea of a 'space', within which people can disagree, and from which they can intervene in debates, is of crucial importance to Osborne. He visualises the project as a 'salon de refuse', which is defined against a monolithic dominant culture characterised by PR and the free-floating image of Melvyn Bragg. Yet, by refusing to be locked in, *Bête Noire* is also locked out; locked out of the means of distribution that would enable Osborne to 'get the news through'.

There is, says Osborne, a certain kind of London poet who is 'absolutely what the magazine doesn't exist to cater for', and Andrew Motion, it seems is it. 'He went to prep school, public school and Oxford' and has those 'movie-star good looks that just facilitate things'. He was based in Hull for a time but moved down to London. He is Philip Larkin's biographer, and regularly carries off some literary prize or other. Against this Osborne places Peter Didsbury, whom he takes to be a much more demanding poet. Didsbury still lives in Hull and in something like poverty: 'About three years ago he stripped his living room of the wall paper, and still hasn't found the money to repaper it'. It follows that Osborne sees *Bête Noire*'s role as being to facilitate Didsbury's activities and not Motion's. Does this mean that he wants to propel Didsbury into Motion's position? The answer is more or less, no.

There is, it seems, a contradictory impulse here – start small and stay small. If a project sets itself against the dominant culture, in what terms does it define its own success? And is not 'marginality' necessarily one of them? Although *Bête Noire* might not explicitly want to keep marginal voices marginal, it can, nonetheless, tend that way. But there is a twist to the dilemma.

For Osborne, the significance of the project's diversity is rooted in modernist practice. He argues that the fragmenting, analytic, subversive element of modernism is more appropriate than ever. This because 'consumer capitalism is much more adroit at dealing with dissent, not by banning it or suppressing it, as happened in the modernist era, but by marketing it'. Joyce was banned; Alice Walker is 'Spielbergised'. A direct consequence, Osborne argues, is that the modernist theory of the avant-garde, is no longer tenable.

In one sense, as Osborne makes clear, this is a positive development. Experimental writers no longer aim their texts over the audience's head, that being an activity at odds with contemporary notions of cultural democracy. On the other hand, if consumer capitalism has learnt to market dissent, is it any longer possible for the dissident writer to resist assimilation? Is there, in other words, anything that cannot be marketed, even Peter Didsbury?

It was precisely the anti-democratic aspect of the avant-gardes that enabled them to disagree. Elitist and banned, above and beyond, modernist artists occupied a social space from which to dissent. The problem for the experimental artist now is not how to prevent marginality, but how to sustain it, and in so doing to find a position compatible with the production of both dissident and democratic art.

It is this problem that *Bête Noire* wrestles with to such dynamic effect, finally defining for itself a space which is not social at all, but physical. In its original sense 'to be dissident' was 'to be remote from', a sense which now re-emerges with a curiously acute political application. Try getting to Hull from London by train. You can't do it direct. You have to change and wait at Sheffield, and or Doncaster, and then get a crawling, cross-country service through the slag heaps that bank the river Humber. This to get to Britain's 12th biggest town.

It is from this space, and this kind of space globally, that *Bête Noire* can sustain its dissent. From this kind of space that Osborne is trying to generate a sort of counter-cosmopolitanism: 'I wanted to draw attention to the fact that some Hull poets are as good as any poets anywhere, and one way of doing that was to juxtapose them with poets of similar quality from those places that, like Hull within England, are not at the centre of the power structure'. 'I'd like to claim that you don't have to live in a Paris, a London or a New York to be cosmopolitan.' *Bête Noire* is not so much trying to redraw the map of contemporary literature. Rather, it is reshaping its political geography.●

**Lilian Zac** on the postmarxist pleasure principle

## Political Twists

To try and find a a task for the Left in today's world is not easy. Slavoj Zizek's new book, **For They Know Not What They Do** (*Verso, hbk £32.95, pbk £11.95*) is an attempt to give some clues as to where one can start looking. By a series of engagements with decontruction, marxism, analytical philosophy, pragmatism, literary criticism, Zizek moves close to elaborating a theory of ideology.

It is possible to detect a number of unifying threads that bind the various lectures together and establish a link with his earlier *The Sublime Object Of Ideology*. First, there are all the Zizek trademarks: a novel and challenging use of Lacanian psychoanalysis to discuss a variety of issues ranging from philosophy and politics to cinema and literature, and the converse: the use of politics or literature to throw light on psychoanalysis.

Second, there is the attempt to understand the political issues of our time: nationalism, racism, totalitarianism, the disintegration of communism (of particular importance for a Slovene).

Third, this book continues with the use of certain modes of argumentation: paradoxes and twists. By means of the latter we become puppets in Zizek's games: just when we think we have arrived somewhere, Zizek turns the screw and everything is on the line again. By the use of paradoxes he manages to avoid certainties because paradoxes



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ultimately contain some irreconcilable inner tension.

Hegel and his *Philosophy of Right* loom large in this work – in fact the excursion into Hegel country is one of its most interesting aspects. We enter a space where 'Hegelese' is spoken, where Derrida and his procession (Gasche and others) can be found with Kant and de Sade sipping pina colada in the VIP lounge. Among the crowd we can catch glimpses of visual artists (Escher, Hopper), film directors (Hitchcock), playwrights (Shakespeare, Brecht), novelists (Kafka, Irving, Chandler), musicians (Mozart, Wagner), and, of course, the compulsory philosopher (Wittgenstein). Each of these visitors will be taken to a different 'locality' within this Hegelian landscape. Such a project is fascinating, even if at times one feels more like a package tourist than a traveller.

Zizek finds in Hegel's work a way of articulating desire with politics. For Zizek, like Hegel, the Law is also its opposite: absolute Crime. What this means is that any (new) reign of Law is founded on violence and horror, but masks its violent foundation with a myth or fantasy. However, there is always something remaining from such an operation (a 'little piece of the real'). In order to grasp how ideology functions it is not enough to make references to the new order and its mechanisms; one must also look into that remainder which resists symbolisation and materialises pure enjoyment.

This is where the question of ethics fits in. How to negotiate the gap between Crime and Law? Zizek suggests that the ethics of the Left should be what he calls the ethics of the drive. This ethics compels us to preserve the traces of all the historical traumas that the ruling ideology would prefer to obliterate. He illustrates this point by the story of the Jew who refuses to leave Poland in order to return again and again to the site of Auschwitz.

If one was to make a criticism of this work it would be perhaps the way Zizek tends to consider the use of force as being concentrated in the moment of violent foundation. Since that foundation can never be totally successful, some form of force must be used to sustain the new order.

Zizek falls short of providing a fully developed theory of ideology precisely because he does not pay enough attention to the persistence of force after the Crime and into the new period of Law.

This criticism should not detract from the overall value of the book, since I believe it will become one of the 'classics' of postmarxism.●

**Mark Sinker** on a fugue of critical theory

# Face The Music

Waiting for a copy of Susan McClary's *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender And Sexuality* (which didn't arrive in time) to review alongside Edward Said's **Musical Elaborations** (*Chatto & Windus, £20.00 hbk*) and Christopher Norris's **Music And The Politics Of Culture** (*Lawrence & Wishart, £9.00 pbk*), I began to wonder if it wouldn't be better – more germane, more dramatic – to add instead Jon Savage's *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols And Punk Rock*. All deal with music as a historically developing social practice, with meanings consciously and unconsciously threaded into it. But of course the subject of Said's book and the collection Norris edits is 'classical' music – 'classical' music processed by the insight-machinery of 'contemporary cultural theory', tenured deconstruction.

Cultural theory in this context means two things. One is acknowledged cheerfully – the influence of Theodor Adorno (they know this reflects well on them). The other is pretty well elided – the fact that all 'contemporary cultural theory' that's any use was developed in response to and out of pop culture. It means that to outsiders – those not uncritically swept up in what Said at one point calls the 'generally cloistral and reverential, not to say deeply insular, habits in writing about music' – there's always a strange sense of the other shoe not falling. Of course, to insiders almost everything in both books is a sign that barbarians are among us. Or rather them.

Said continues quotably: '... The closer one looks at the geography of Western culture and of music's place in it... the more socially involved and active music seems, the more concealed its social energies have been beneath its technically specialised, rigourously circumscribed, and, since the 17th century, perfected articulations.' What's going on here, in Said's elegant essays, and in the more or less trudging but solid pieces Norris edits, is an attempt to bring 'classical' music back into the real world, to unpick its myths, to revoke its privileges, while allowing that it retains value.

The main problem for us barbarians is that, even when the facts presented are new, the effect is still old news. To anyone taught to think by thinking about pop, classical canons are just Top Tens which stay the same every week (and year, and decade). It's intriguing to learn how Elgar's place in the pantheon was constructed, for example, and why Delius missed out, but it actually isn't terribly instructive. And it's simply irritating to have to clamber round ignorant and dismissive knee-jerk references to degenerate MassCult music. The worst example – my favourite – comes in Malcolm Barry's piece on Shostakovich when he talks of 'the techno-pop horrors (whether muzak or industrial pop based on transnational record companies)' – right, and that Michael Jackson used to sing with Throbbing Gristle, didn't he?

The deep questions are still avoided, or touched on and not explored; in particular, how the technologies of mass reproduction and instant dissemination have altered how we hear, and how the fall from dominance of written music in the late 40s (economically and semiotically) has absolutely restructured power-settlements within music.

Alan Durant is easily best on stuff like this: 'Improvisation In The Political Economy Of Music' chases down some of the ideas Jacques Attali's *Noise* intuited, about turbulence and order in musical structure, and its relationship to the social. Elsewhere, attitudes are often simply undiluted Adorno (who'd have dumped Schönberg in a second if he'd ever copped the alienation in thrash-metal) or Benjamin (who was writing about film and photography anyway).

Said is good on the utopian dreams buried in art practice, and this alone makes *Elaborations* worthy of attention. Beside it, essays such as Nicholas Williams' examination of Alexander Goehr's opera (which specifically deals with political utopianism) seem stiff-necked and simpleminded.

OK, it's a start. But it's a very late start. Ask me why

the Sex Pistols are more important to the understanding of political utopianism than Alexander Goehr, and I could talk all night. I wish I felt there was writing here that could make me doubt this: could convince me you really can only understand 'classical' music by *not* knowing – or pretending not to know – about the rest of music, but there isn't. McClary's book is as much about Madonna as madrigals. Let that shoe fall, boys.●



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● **Clyde Books, Glasgow.** Scotland's only progressive bookshop. Politics, Ecology, Economy, Black Studies, Feminism, Scottish and Irish fiction, Current affairs. 19 Parnie St, G1 5RJ. At the Tron Theatre.

## MESSAGES

● **Male, 28,** seeks travel companion for round-the-world trip (one year). Sun, fun and culture. Box no. 96.

## MT HANDS

● **Plasterer.** References supplied. Chris 081-889 3329.

## *Marxism Today* Back Issues Urgently Required

Our back issues archive has become sadly depleted, would any kind readers be able to donate any of the following issues in good condition?

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Either send direct to **Marxism Today Back issues, 6 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF** or if you can donate more than 10 of the above issues please telephone us direct on **071-278 4430**. Thank you for your help.

## MT EVENTS

● **Hackney:** *Global Times*, a series of seminars on globalisation and localisation, begins Monday 4 November and continues weekly at 'Anna's Place', 90 Mildmay Park, London N1. Start time is 7.45pm and the first seminar is on *Europe after 1992*. Organised by Hackney MT Group. Details from Sarah, 081-533 6327.

● **North London:** The North London MT Forum is now planning an event for Autumn 1992. If you would like details or would be interested in joining the organising group write to NLMTF, 28 Wargrave Ave, London N15 6UD.

## IN MEMORIAM

**IAN MERRILEES**

In memory of Ian Merrilees and gratitude for his many years of help and service. Our condolences to June and his family from all at Marxism Today.

**ALAN CURTIS**

Our condolences to Elaine on the tragic death of Alan. Lots of love from everyone at Marxism Today.

## VIDEOS

- **Forgotten Millions**
- **Gorbachev's Asylums**
- **The False Confessions File**

Videos of films made for ITV and Channel 4 on mental health worldwide, Soviet psychiatric hospitals and why people confess to the police.
**Available from Psychology News, 17a Great Ormond Street WC1N 3RA.**
Each film £20 + £3.75 VAT and p&p.

## ASLEF

Some may profit from privatisation but as a whole the country does not. Keep the railways in public ownership.

**Derrick Fullick**
General Secretary


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**Production:** Millie Burton, Ann Coddington, Aldo Paolella.




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# Jatinder Verma

The artistic director of Tara Arts, Britain's leading Asian company, Jatinder Verma was born in Tanzania and came to England in 1968. He is most widely known for his vivid and fresh productions of the European classics, notably his outstandingly successful *Tartuffe* for the National Theatre. A founder member of Black Theatre Forum, he has also served on Arts Council committees. In 1990 his unique blending of British, European and Asian cultural heritages was rewarded with the *Time Out/01 For London* special drama award.

**What animal best characterises you, and why?** The horse: its head is up when it will brook no change in its path, and lowered when it is merely flowing with the tide.

**What was your first thought this morning?** I am incapable of doing all I want to do, yet I must.

**If you have children; how do you want them to resemble you and to differ from you?** Be patient. And be honest to themselves.

**What do you blame your parents for?** Not teaching me that love is a gift, not an obligation.

**Do you believe in a god, or any form of religion?** I am Hindu by birth, so I have no church, though a plethora of beliefs.

**You're driving through a hot, desolate expanse. What's playing on the stereo?** Carl Orf's *Carmina Burana* and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's *Quuraalis*.

**Would you like to alter anything about your appearance?** In moments of despair, I think a white skin would make life so much easier! But then I wouldn't be half of what I am now.

**Do you pay your poll tax?** Yes: in Kenya when it was a British colony. The chickens have come home to roost!

**What would you die for?** I'm still searching!

**Which thinker has has most effect on your own personal philosophy?** Marx and Krishna, in the *Gita*.

**Who would you most like to change places with?** A pilot on a jumbo: remaining suspended in the air, coming to action only in emergencies.

**Did you support the Gulf war?** No. I could not rid myself of the feeling that the (white) West was replaying its relations with the oriental 'other' – however much Saddam was clearly a jerk.

**Are you superstitious?** Yes. I always do things in threes.

**What is the largest amount of money you've spent on clothes?** £100. A leather overcoat from Istanbul.

**Do you enjoy playing games?** Badminton, Mah Jong – and I'd like to take up archery.

**How well does British theatre reflect the multi-culturalism of our society?** Not sufficiently. Increasing 'integration' of cast has rarely led to a challenge to existing conventions. Power is still, essentially, in white hands. Cultural pluralism has yet to be translated into cultural equity.

**What tv do you watch to relax?** American movies and Liverpool playing.

**Which politician do you find least unattractive?** Paddy Ashdown.

**Which frivolous magazines do you take?** None. But I enjoy Robert Ludlum's and Eric von Lustbader's books whenever I'm travelling.

**Who does the cleaning where you live?** My wife is an obsessive cleaner. I clean on impulse: she, with piety.

**Which is your favourite film, and your most hated one?** Favourite: Guru Dutt's *Kaagaz Kay Phool* (Paper Flowers), made in India in the 50s. There is none I positively hate, though I can't often bear to sit through an English movie – ie, one made in England.

**If you couldn't do your current job, what would you do?** Be a bus driver. Be a cog in a machine and let others take the limelight or the blame.

**Do you have a recurring dream?** I am in a vortex that is pulling me further and further away from my body.

**Has the artistic representation of black and Asian people improved in recent years...** Marginally. More of us are 'visible', but few are in positions of power, and those that are have done little to bring about great changes.

**...and what changes in perception still need to be made?** That we *are* the culture of Britain today and into the future. Not the exotic outsiders only.

**What are your addictions?** Smoking – which I have a lot of: and sex – which I don't have enough of.

**Who cooks the meals in your house?** My wife. And the Chinese and Indian takeaways.

**What part of this life would you take into another life?** Migrating. Not having any 'roots' other than those created by your mind.

**What is your favourite junk food?** Sheekh kebab.

**Which film star do you dream about?** Waheeda Rehman, a star of 50s/60s Indian cinema.

**Are you a thinker or a doer?** Both. With relish. Though my actors often accuse me of thinking too much.

**What is the worst job in the world?** Being a theatre director. You have to be a sponge and a sieve for everyone's emotions but your own.

**What do you no longer believe in?** Nothing. I am not yet ready to meet with Yama, the god of death!

**How do you want to have changed by the end of the millennium?** To have become more honest with myself and others, and therefore more at peace: in other words, to have given full rein to love!

**How much more do you want to achieve?** To live to see the day when the Asian is one of the respected species on earth!●



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*Mekong Delta, Vietnam*

12 days visiting Hanoi, Ninh Binh, Da Nang, Ho Chi Min City, Cu Chi, and My Tho and the Mekong Delta, plus two days in Bangkok. Next group departs 10 November – £1145. Individual travel at any time via Bangkok.

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*Our marathon runner at Omsk, Siberia, August 1991*

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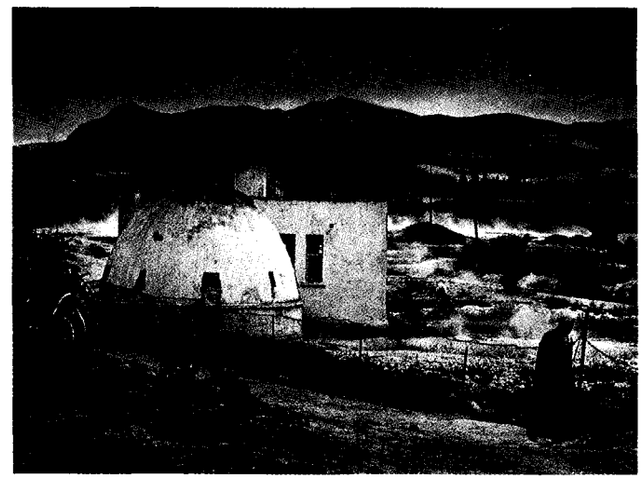

*Guelma, Algeria*

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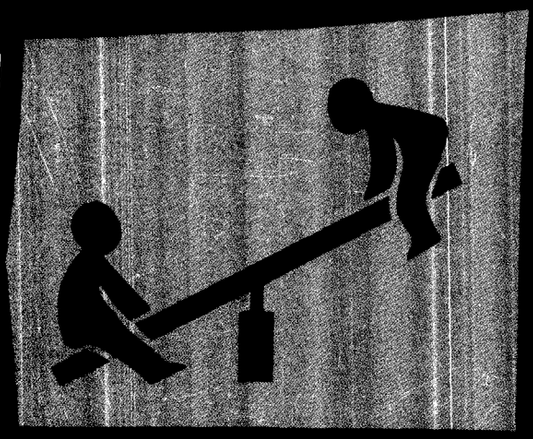
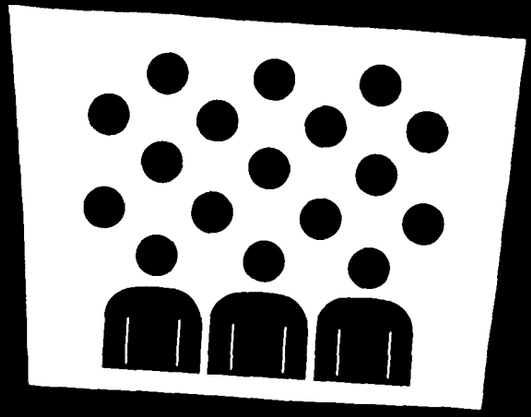
# BILLY BRAGG





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